

Horizon

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

SIMPLE PLEASURES

by R. C. TREVELYAN

SAMUEL PALMER

by GEOFFREY GRIGSON

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

by EVELYN WAUGH

LETTER FROM FRANCE—II

ANONYMOUS

PRE-WAR CITIZEN

by TANGYE LEAN

DRAWING *by* OSBERT LANCASTER

REVIEWS *by* STEPHEN SPENDER AND GEOFFREY GRIGSON

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NOVEMBER VOL. IV, No. 23 1941

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HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

Vol. IV No. 23 November 1941

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMMENT	299
LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES—I (Drawing)	Osbert Lancaster 303
SIMPLE PLEASURES	R. C. Trevelyan 304
SAMUEL PALMER: THE POLITICS OF AN ARTIST	Geoffrey Grigson 314
MY FATHER'S HOUSE	Evelyn Waugh 329
LETTER FROM FRANCE—II	Anonymous 341
PRE-WAR CITIZEN	Tangye Lean 359

REVIEW by Stephen Spender

REPRODUCTIONS:

There are reproductions of drawings by Samuel Palmer between pages 318 and 319, and two photographs from the film 'Citizen Kane' between pages 360 and 361.

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COMMENT

IN this number of *Horizon* there are no poems. This is not accidental, it is rather an act of editorial passive resistance, a negative criticism of the poetry which is submitted. Lovers of poetry will be more than compensated by Mr. R. C. Trevelyan's 'Simple pleasures', which show that it is still possible to write poetical prose, and to produce by a combination of taste and patience a sensual catalogue which neither cloyes nor irritates, but reminds us of the sanity that has been and will be.

Why is there no poetry like this? *Horizon* receives a hundred poems a week. Why are they so bad?

Because most poets have no idea what poetry is about or what a poem ought to be. Of a hundred poems seventy should never have been written. They represent the bottom level of trash which has never varied, except in bulk, throughout the centuries, for all bad poetry is much the same.

It is the other thirty poems which demand attention. They too are bad but in a different way. One cannot help feeling that their badness is curable, that they exhibit errors peculiar to the present time, a disease (like nightblindness) which we can attribute to a particular cause. If one were to make an anthology of them it would be called 'The Hampstead Book of Puritan Verse'.

What are the three characteristics of Puritan verse? Poverty of imagination, poverty of diction, poverty of experience—the characteristics, in fact, of Puritan prose and Puritan painting. If we examine an imaginary poet, for example, John Weaver, 'whose austere verse, eschewing all tricks and facile solutions, so clearly depicts the dilemma of the intellectual in the period of *entre deux guerres*', we find that he is any age between twenty and forty, is 'the child of professional parents, was educated at a major university and a minor public school, has Marxist sympathies, and is at present trying to reconcile communism, with religion, pacifism with war, property with revolution and homosexuality with marriage.' He will have been published in *New Verse*, *New Writing*, and *New Directions*, and have produced one volume of verse, with an Introduction by Herbert Read, called *The Poet's Thumb*. 'Weaver is actively interested in politics and took part in several processions at the time of the Spanish

War. Indeed, his "particularly individual imagery discloses an extreme awareness of the contemporary situation". *Heart* *we have been handed our passport, Love's visa has expired, Jackboots Death, Bed, my Guernica*, and many other poems show that he was among the first to hear, like MacNeice, *The Gunbutt on the door*.

For an interesting thing about Weaver is that though younger than Auden and MacNeice, he is completely dominated by them. He imitates their scientific journalism, their Brain Trust vulgarity without the creative energy of the one or the scholarship of the other, just as he assimilates the piety of Spender and the decorum of Day Lewis into his correct, flat, effortless passionless verses. And it is Weaver, now at an O.C.T.U. or in the Air Force Intelligence, who is responsible for some of the badness of war poetry, who used to write *Comrades we have come to a watershed*, and now talks about *Love's tracer bullets* even as his brother Paul, who once painted ascetic winter streets for the East London Group, is responsible, with his fossilized landscapes of tanks and hangars, for some of the badness of war art. An element of Puritanism is always present in a good artist, but he should have been other things as well. The Puritan poet of the thirties has been nothing, he has been afraid of life and repelled by it, and so has acquired no experience to digest what he has caught in the pincer-movement of the dialectic he has acquired. He has the modern vice of arrogant over-simplification, nor has he developed the imagination by reading or travel. He is incomplete as a person and therefore sterile as an artist, the possessor of a desiccated vocabulary which is not his own, but which he has timidly inherited from his poetic uncles, Auden and Spender, who made use of it to chasten the Georgians, and by whom, having served its purpose, it has been discarded. Such poets as John Weaver, who exist rootless in the present without standards or comparisons, are doomed to swift extinction, for the war has proved a godsend to bad artists, allowing them to attain honourably and for their country's good that impotence which in peacetime is only accepted after a long and terrible struggle. In choosing his poetry *Horizon* has tried to avoid printing a poem by John Weaver: he has been mentioned only because he represents the fair to middling poetry that has been rejected. Here, by Mr. Evelyn Waugh, is an opinion which would seem to belie this.

'Then the poetry. It seems to me of very poor quality, though I don't doubt it is the best you can buy. But I think it is time we made up our minds that poetry is one of the arts which has died in the last eighty years. Poets now have as much connexion with poetry as the Fishmongers' Company has with selling fish. They carry on the name and the banquets but have retired from trade generations ago. The men who write your "poetry" seem to me to be trying to live on the prestige of a dead art. Shelley talked of poets as the legislators of the world, and they seem to have applied this to themselves without any justification at all. I believe "poetry" now should be left to the unpaid columns of the provincial press without making the writers foolish by labelling them so inappropriately.'

'Most poets (according to Spender in the *Listener*) would refute Shelley's claim. Nevertheless—he adds—there is a core of truth in the statement which it is irresponsible to evade. Here we reach a deep cause of puritanism—the poetic sense of responsibility. Let us tell the poets at once that no one need legislate who does not want to, for to be an unacknowledged legislator to-day involves reading so much science, politics, and economics that only a Huxley, Heard or Joad or Auden can undertake it. All we ask of the poets is to sing.

The novelist writes about poetry, however, as if it were an extinct liqueur. There will always be poetry in England: it is the concentrated essence of the English genius, distilled from our temperate climate and intemperate feelings, and there will always be critics who claim that it is dead. But, poetry is going through a bad patch. The sophisticated intellectual poetry of the twenties is exhausted. Poetry was taken down a cul de sac to get away from the Georgians, and now it has to find its way back. The academic socialism of the thirties was not strong enough to revive it, we are waiting for a new romanticism to bring it back to life. This will happen when the tide of events sweeps round the lonely stumps in which our cormorants have been sitting and gives them a fishing ground—for one of the difficulties of John Weaver has been the isolation of his mood from the uneasy fatuity of between-war England, and another, up to the war, the sheltered unwonted eventful character of his life. Now that events have caught up with his prognostic and he is no longer out of step with the rest of the population, his work will deepen and simplify itself.

This process is only just beginning, and this new kind of poetry is still of uncertain quality—nevertheless, a magazine can do something to help by eliminating from its pages the conventional Puritan verse, what Shakespeare must have meant by 'here are only numbers ratified; but, for the elegance, facility, and golden cadence of poesy, caret', and by publishing those poems which reflect the lyrical influence of Lorca rather than the intellectualism of Auden, Eliot or Rilke, or by publishing by women writers like K. J. Raine, Ann Ridler, or E. J. Scovell, who have by-passed both academic asceticism and rhyming journalism, or by young soldier writers like Alun Lewis, to whom it comes easily to be simple (their French equivalent, now a prisoner, is Patrice de la Tour du Pin), and by encouraging only the best work of the best younger poets—Spender, Empson, Thomas, Barker, Rogers, Vernon Watkins.

As an industrial nation we lag behind: our factories are not the largest, our generals not the wisest, but as an ancient civilization that is not neurotic, where thought once more is correlated with action, and which fights for its beliefs, we should, in those invisible exports like poetry and fine writing, be in a position to lead the world.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

The Letter from France is by the same talented lady who wrote the Letter in the March Number of *Horizon*. The 'Simple Pleasures' of R. C. Trevelyan are reprinted from the *Abingdon Chronicle*.

'My Father's House' is an episode from Evelyn Waugh's new long incomplete novel, *Work Suspended*, which will appear shortly in Penguin Parade No. 10.

The Christmas *Horizon* will contain Raymond Mortimer's essay on Balzac, a letter on Spain, and a new piece by Arturo Barea.

The January *Horizon* will be a Young Irish Number, and include a Comment from Dublin, an article on Jack Yeats painting.



R. C. TREVELYAN

SIMPLE PLEASURES

By Simple Pleasures I mean those for whose enjoyment the exercise of the intellect or the imagination is not necessary. Thus I would not include among them pleasures that are mainly artistic and contemplative, such as watching a ballet or a sunset, or listening to music. Also, in order to limit my list, which must be arbitrary and cover but a small part even of my own experience, I shall exclude the more complex social and erotic pleasures, those also of games, of sport, and of the palate. Many that might seem to be childish are really not so, and are enjoyable at any time of life. But purely childish pleasures, such as taking rides on a lion's stick, or pretending to be a railway train, generally require more imaginative make-believe than an adult is capable of: so these have excluded.

Most of our simple pleasures consist of immediate and unsophisticated sensuous reactions to common daily objects and processes that make up the world as we know it. They are congenital and sometimes unconscious parts of our mental and emotional life, governing our tastes and desires, and colouring our more conscious and elaborate states of mind. They are the raw material out of which happiness is composed, and the soil into which poetry strikes its roots.

Some classification will be necessary, that my list may not degenerate into a random catalogue. But many pleasures would seem to belong to more than one class, either because they come to us through more than one of our senses at the same time, or else because the emotions they arouse may vary on different occasions.

PLEASURES OF SIGHT

To watch drops coursing down the window-panes of railway carriages or down the sides of a bath, making a favourite in the race now of one drop, now of another.

To see the wind racing in waves of light and shadow across the tall grasses of a hayfield, or through a silver-green field of oats.

An elephant walking.

To watch young rabbits at the edge of a cover, chasing and jumping over one another. To hear the doe, when she is aware of you, thump on the ground a warning to her young with lifted hind-legs.

Walking through a wood in May to come upon a brood of fox-cubs sauntering among the bluebells and campions near their birth. If you are on their lee side and move stealthily, you may sometimes come within a few yards of them and watch them unperceived for quite a long time.

To see a fox anywhere and anywhen.

On a station platform or at a level-crossing to stand within a couple of yards of a train passing at full speed.

To watch from a carriage window the engine smoke drifting, dying, vanishing over the fields.

To see the waves breaking on a sandy or a shingly shore—the green luminous transparent crystal of its arching back, as each new wave curls over and falls—the difference between the strength and the reach of the successive waves—where the sand is level, the smooth shallow wash, embossed with foam, running in with a hiss, but soon slowing, pausing, turning, then flooding back to meet the oncoming wave. If the beach be shingly, the grand multitudinous noise, like a vast sigh, as the spent wave drags a myriad pebbles back with it a few inches.

As when heav'd anew

Old ocean rolls a lengthened wave to the shore,
Down whose green back the short-liv'd foam, all hoar,
Burst gradual, with a wayward indolence.

KEATS, *Endymion*, II, 347.

Drifting thistle-down or silvery willow-herb seeds.

To watch the flight of pigeons, rooks, sea-gulls, or dragonflies. A gull dropping down on to the water with upright wings, then folding them on its back as it settles.

To watch groups and lines of sparks running this way and that the soot covering the back of a fire-place.

To look down over the bows of a ship in calm weather, and see the prow cutting and cleaving the water.

The marvellous behaviour of her hair,
Bending with finer swerve from off her brow
Than water which relents before a prow.

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE, *Mary and the Bramble*.

To walk early in May through an oak-wood, where the birch and hazel undergrowth is sparse enough to allow vast carpets of bluebells to stretch away continuously in all directions.

A star gliding down the sky; a single, double, or triple rainbow; the moon rising or setting beyond a high rocky mountain-ridge.

To stand watching the woodman sawing through the heart of a tall oak tree. They pause to knock their wedges deeper into the widening cleft; then saw a little, but soon pause again, and stand peering up and consulting. They slip the saw out of the crack, and hammer in a new wedge. At each stroke the whole tree shudders through all its branches and twigs. Now it is moving. Gently at first it falls, slowly and silently; then with a loud crackling resounds the earth and lies still.

To watch snow falling; and next day, after a frost, to see the wind send the loose snow scudding over the hard crusted surface of the field, or lift and whirl it away in clouds and eddies.

PLEASURES OF SOUND

The hoot of an owl; the cry of a curlew, a golden plover, or a peewit; the cawing of rooks and jackdaws; the distant croak of a lonely raven; the cooing of doves; the shout of a cuckoo.

When listening to a nightjar churring, as he squats along the dead branch of a pine-tree, to hear him slightly alter the pitch of his churr without bringing it to an end. Then to see him wing his way silently away into the dusk, yet now and then uttering a strange high-pitched cry, or clapping his wings together loudly above his back.

A donkey's bray from a distance.

Listening to the sound of a hay-cutter, or of a scythe, or to the hum of a threshing-machine.

The sound of unseen horses' hooves; the tap of a cricket bat against a ball on a summer's day; the rhythmical purring sound of milk spurting down into a pail.

The sound of skates, and the noise of a stone thrown along ice.

To go through a house tapping various hard substances with one's knuckles or finger-tips, and distinguishing the subtle differences of resonance given out by solid or hollow wood in furniture, panels and doors, by stone or plaster walls, by bronze and boxes and water-pipes, et cetera.

The confused bleating, and the smell, of a large flock of sheep on the move.

To hear from inside a house the faint sound of rain beginning to fall outside.

When in a wood the summer sun comes out again after having been hidden for a time, to hear a myriad flies suddenly begin buzzing and humming again in the tree-tops.

When lying awake at night to hear the faint sound of trucks being shunted a long way off.

To lie on the beach listening to the indolent waves breaking slowly—'Each ere it breaketh pausing long as it can'.

To sit beside a small brook and listen to the varied sound that comes from its tiny cascades, near and far, as it falls from pool to pool. One may often distinguish a number of quite different sounds, each with its own monotonous pitch and quality, loudness and softness, yet all delicately orchestrated together into one many-toned harmony.

Walking along a country lane, when the wind is too weak to stir the foliage of the trees, to be surprised by a steady murmuring sound overhead, and, looking up, to see that it comes from a great aspen poplar, whose myriads of light-hung leaves are fluttering and rustling against each other incessantly, be the breeze never so light.

On a summer's day to become suddenly aware of the fierce hum of a swarm of bees.

PLEASURES OF TOUCH

The feel, to the touch of one's fingers, of leaves, grasses, cloth, paper, metals, jade, china, wood, et cetera.

The feel of the first drops of rain on one's bare head, face and hands.

Cutting the pages of a book with a long ivory paper-knife. This is a pleasure, even though we know the book to be unreadable. A wooden or metal knife is a poor substitute. Postcards, envelopes or hairpins are ignoble and treacherous tools.

To feel and hear acorns or husks of beech-nuts crunched beneath one's foot, or the crackle of thin white ice covering a puddle.

To walk with one's feet brushing through dry chestnut or beech leaves.

To pick up a mole that has come to the surface, and feel struggling in one's hands for a short time.

Stroking the soft nostrils of a horse.

Playing with the wax of a lighted candle; breaking off a stick of wax that has run down the side of the candle, and melting it drop by drop in the flame.

PLEASURES OF SMELL

The scent of new-mown hay.

In the streets of a town to come suddenly upon the smell of an unseen brewery, or of coffee-beans roasting.

The smell of wood-smoke, or of a peat fire.

The odour of a new sponge, of resin, of gummy poplar leaves of the rain-soaked earth after a drought.

The smell of a railway or traction engine, when one is a boy.

The smell of horses and stables, of cow-sheds, farmyards, and manure heaps.

The scent of unsmoked tobacco, of cedar-wood cigar-boxes and spills, of boots and shoes, and of Harris tweed.

PHYSICAL PLEASURES

Stretching, taking deep breaths, yawning, sneezing, scratching.

Running barefoot on smooth grass or sand, or walking barefoot on high fells after rain, through plashy grass and mossy bog.

Rolling naked on the snow before plunging into the sea. The delicious warmth, so it then seems, of the sea-waves.

To bathe in the sea by moonlight, especially when a fresh wind is blowing inshore, driving the waves rapidly before it, while a late-risen, low-hanging moon is lighting up their long rounded backs, leaving the troughs in shadow, so that nothing of the water is visible except its impetuous silent swiftmess, long lines of brightness and darkness sweeping noiselessly past one.

Chewing grasses; unsheathing and eating grains of wheat or oats; sucking honey from clover flowers.

Running down the steep rough side of a hill. One must look, not at one's feet, but a yard or so in front of them, and must know with instinctive certainty where to place one's feet. Also descending a steep gravel slope, or a scree of small stones, at full speed with long strides, throwing one's weight on the heels.

Walking as far as one can without losing one's balance along one of the rails of a railway line.

All the operations of shaving with an old-fashioned Tubalcain¹ razor are pleasurable: first stropping (preferably with a wooden strop); then lathering with a fragrant soap; last shaving with a blade warmed by dipping it in hot water; the firm rhythmical sweep of the razor, the methodical disappearance of the soap, and the final washing of the face with cold water. I do not know whether shaving with a safety razor be a pleasure or a martyrdom, as I have never tried it.

After a hot bath, to let the water run out, and then turn on the cold tap and sponge oneself all over with cold water.

To sit in a small rowing or sailing boat, and hold one's hand over the side in the cool water.

PLEASURES OF INDOLENCE

To lie on one's back in grass or heather looking up into the blue sky.

Those who at the height of noon
Loll back on scented heather late in June
And sound beyond blue, blue and blue beyond.

T. STURGE MOORE, *Danae*.

To lie on a sofa looking at the varied decorations of one's bookshelves. But this may easily become a complex emotion of pleasure or regret; the pleasure and pride of a collector and possessor, or regret at having read so few of the books, or the thought that so many are not worth the trouble of reading.

To sink down, tired, into an armchair, or into one's bed.

Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto. CATULLUS.

To lie back, looking up into the branches of a huge beech-tree, or of a dark yew, studded with scarlet berries.

Lying in bed on a summer morning, to hear big flies or bumblebees bump from outside against the window-panes from time to time.

FEARFUL PLEASURES

Seeing a snake. Even to come upon a harmless grass-snake sleeping in the sun, to touch its tail with one's finger, and watch

¹Tubalcain, the son of Lamech and Zillah, was 'an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron'. *Genesis* v, 20.

it start moving, at first sluggishly, then swifter and swifter, till 'with indented glides' it disappears in the grass—even this is to me a somewhat fearful pleasure; though less fearful than nearly treading on a long black snake in the grass of a Ceylon garden. I seem to remember every place where I have ever seen a snake, which is evidence, if not of the pleasure, at least of its fearfulness.

After swimming too far out from the shore, and turning to swim back in fear of currents, to seem at first to be making no progress, but at last to perceive from the position of the rocks that one is a little nearer to the land, and will reach it safely in time.

To stand close up to a cage in a Zoo, in which a lion is roaring his loudest and fiercest. Donald Tovey once told me how his five-year-old brother was seen standing stock-still facing a roaring lion, and was heard muttering to himself: 'Lions are very kind to little boys'.

In the old days of horse-vehicles, to cross a crowded street without waiting for the policeman to hold up the traffic. One should always walk, and only take to running when imminent danger threatens. If two try to cross together, the risk is more than doubled.

Solitary rock-climbing, where I have sometimes found myself in positions in which there seemed to be no way of going up or down without great risk of falling. While the danger lasted, the fear was stronger than the pleasure; but when it was over, the pleasure was intense.

A thunderstorm is a very wonderful pleasure. When I was young I was afraid of the lightning, but not so much as to spoil my delight in the thunder. I have now for many years delighted in the lightning too. No sound moves me so much as thunder—whether crashing overhead or muttering convulsively from afar. No sight is grander than an approaching storm—the lurid light—the torn cloud-masses, rapidly mixing and severing—the veil of rain sweeping nearer, streaked with lightning flashes. I have heard that Beethoven was once discovered on a hill-top conducting a real thunderstorm. Lucretius, however, writes:

Whose limbs cower not in terror, when beneath
The appalling stroke of thunder the parched earth
Shudders, and mutterings run through the vast sky?

Such terror seems to have been common even among Roman

matrons, for Cato, the rigid old Censor, let it be known that he never embraced his wife except during a big thunderstorm; so that, as he said, he was a happy man whenever Zeus was thundering. One would like to know whether he observed a similar rule with regard to the slave-girl with whom at one time he cohabited.

TOWN PLEASURES

Some of these town pleasures are now obsolete, for London at least has changed much since I was a young man, and is still changing rapidly. Hansoms, horse-buses, crossing-sweepers and Italian organ-grinders are extinct, and yellow fogs are not what they were.

When crossing the Charing Cross footbridge, to look down on the flow of the river and on the Thames barges, and, if it is low tide, on the lovely smooth shining surface of the mud. Then to look up across the old Waterloo Bridge at St. Paul's and the City churches.

A ride in a hansom cab. This was a fearful pleasure, because, if the horse should fall, one would be thrown forward on to the front of the cab, and might be seriously hurt.

To sit on the top of a horse-bus, just behind the driver, and watch his skilful driving, and the broad bare backs of his horses.

To give a penny to an old crossing-sweeper, or throw a sixpence out of the window to an Italian organ-grinder, who sings as he grinds, with a monkey on his barrel-organ.

It used to be a great delight to me as a boy to press hard with the end of my stick against a row of iron railings as I walked, and so produce a marvellous *glissando* on a single note.

To stop and watch a Punch and Judy show in a bye-street.

To hear the bell and the street-cry of the muffin and crumpet man approaching and receding.

To grope through a good thick yellow fog listening to the weird sound of unseen feet and horses' hooves.

To get up at dawn and walk across London to Covent Garden, when the streets are empty save for an occasional policeman or porter's donkey-cart. At Covent Garden to watch the old women selling peas, and expert market-men carrying a tower of a dozen or more round baskets balanced on their heads.

To pick up and pocket a sixpence or shilling from the pavement of a street.

When walking through the crowded streets, to look for second or so straight into the eyes of someone as he approaches and passes by us. We then have the illusion that by the expression of the eyes—the eyes alone, without the help of the other features—the whole character and temperament of the passer-by is revealed to us—happiness or misery, kindness or moroseness, humour and intelligence or stupidity.

The magic streets allure me, faces strange
Who pass and pass, and haunting human eyes,
Eyes that I love, and never see again.

LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH, *Sonnets*.

PLEASURES OF WATCHING INSECTS

To come upon a huge ant-hill in a pine-wood. To watch the activities of ants, large or small.

To see a spider weaving her web.

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
It launched forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

WALT WHITMAN

The sight of hundreds of spider-webs, all their threads sagging with the weight of the morning dew, each web a marvel of bright silver, gleaming against the dark bushes.

To watch closely how a centipede walks.

Teasing a wood-louse till it curls itself into a ball, then watching how within less than a minute it warily unrolls itself and scurries away.

To watch a hover-fly poising motionless, then darting to another spot to poise again, then alighting with outstretched feet on some object. To listen to its two faint notes, when poised in the air, and when resting—so different, yet both such beautiful 'gossamers of sound'.

To watch a humming-bird hawk-moth drinking honey from a flower on hovering wing, with long tongue uncurled and outstretched.

PLEASURES OF DESTRUCTION, OF FIRE,
AND OF WATER

Lighting a fire, and watching the flames spread from match to paper, from paper to wood, from wood to coal; feeding the fire with coal or wood, and reviving it when nearly dead, with or without bellows.

Tearing up and burning superannuated letters and papers.

It is to me a great pleasure (though perhaps at the same time a great grief) to watch anything, from a forest or a house or a haystack to a small cardboard box, consumed by flames; and the flames themselves are infinitely various in beauty.

Slashing down nettles or thistles with a walking-stick; cutting out with a knife dandelions and plantains with as much of their roots as possible.

Killing clothes-moths and mosquitoes.

To watch the incoming tide creep up, surround and undermine a child's sand-castle, until gradually it has all slidden down into the wash.

My father used to teach us, when we were children, how to dam up a small stream, till we had formed quite a big pool for paddling in. At last we broke the dam and watched with delight the water sweep down in a magnificent rushing flood. This, though a childish pleasure, my father seemed to enjoy as much as we did.

Where there are pools of standing rain-water in muddy lanes and cart-tracks, it is a great pleasure to open channels through the mud with stick, hands, or boots, so as to invite the water to flow away to some pool or stream on a lower level. Homer shows us one of his similes in the *Iliad* that he, too, before he grew blind, must have loved the pleasures of playing with water.

'And just as when a man, who guides a rill, leads its stream from a dark spring among his plants and garden plots, a mattock in his hands, and flings away obstructions from the channel; and it flows onward, all the pebbles are swept along, and swiftly it slides murmuring down the steep slope, and outstrips him who is guiding it.'

GEOFFREY GRIGSON

SAMUEL PALMER: THE POLITICS OF AN ARTIST

WE know very little of English artists. Few have been studied. We have still only the beginnings of an art history. Books on English painting are mostly books of individual taste, category books (animal painters, water-colour painters, portrait painters, genre painters), and books which, whether 'histories' or picture galleries, repeat an arbitrary ranking of artists made first of all round about 1850. We know much, though, of English poets—almost all English poets. Experts and amateurs in scholarship work them over like ploughland; and even if their criticism in exposition neglects the general factors which bore upon their verse, we can say things about this or that poet with some certainty that we are not risking a prejudice or projecting nonsense. Minor poets, too, are not despised. They are edited. Minor poets have Mr. Blunden to watch over them, as well as anthologists to keep them known. But minor painters, yes, and major ones too, are, if not despised—contempt should involve knowledge—at least neglected. Here is a list, as they come into my head, of some neglected artists: Patch, Walton, Stubbs, Fuseli, Cristoforo Banti, Mulready, Stothard, Linnell, Flaxman, Danby, von Holst, Smetham. What kind of mark would you get if you were asked to 'place' each one in ten lines? And yet all of them have done work worth contemplating, and have done something to alter or modify the practice and spirit of English art.

The cause of this neglect is not at all obscure. English art, historically and thoroughly, is a romantic art, an art of individualism. It grew up quickly. It had no time to establish itself, to enlist recognition and criticism, before it had been falsified, and emasculated, by the new values of a wealthy, moralizing, reforming, sentimental and in many ways excellent middle-class. That is where the blame lies, if one can put the blame on to history. And if we try to blame the formalizing, bland influence of the Academy, or the ineptitude of many of the dabbling civil servants who have had charge of

public collections of English art, or the ill-informed, uninquisitive meddling of the wealthy or aristocratic dilettanti who appoint them,¹ or the apathy of the public educated to say either nothing or else No, or the unenterprising greed of publishers and art dealers, we are wasting our indignation upon a process. What remains is that English art stays almost, in its full nature, unknown. All accounts of it are inadequate. All Lives of English artists written until lately are in their degrees æsthetically or vitally worthless, often ridiculous, and invariably, by licking the boots of a moral or a snobbish code, dishonest. Knowles's *Life of Fuseli* is one early example, Leslie's *Constable* is another. Leslie's presentation of his friend is an idealised presentation. Not the *Constable* who caustically referred to Etty's *Youth at the Prow and Pleasure at the Helm* as Etty's bum-boat.

Samuel Palmer was also victimised—by himself, by his friends, by his son, who wrote his *Life* and burnt his papers, and by art critics, victimised, that is, by the process and by all its agents. What I shall do in this article is re-examine the first years of his life as an artist, using a good many new facts by which Palmer's relation to history and to English romantic art, or, in short, English art, can be fixed. In all accounts of him, the inaccuracy about Samuel Palmer begins early. He is represented as the son of a bookseller and a Baptist (a lowly and sentimentally correct and sentimentally romantic origin), who endured poverty during his visionary seclusion in the Kentish hills.

Palmer, in truth, came of a comfortable, middle-class, Church of England family, and though he was never rich, he inherited several thousand pounds as a young man, and was also, in a small way, a property owner at Shoreham. His grandfather, Christopher Palmer, was partner in a well-known firm of hatters, Moxon, Palmer and Norman, his great-grandfather was a Sussex clergyman. His uncle, Nathaniel Palmer (who did not approve of him as an artist), was a wealthy corn-factor and stockbroker. His father was indeed a bookseller, and a feckless man; but his bookshop in Broad Street (now the fag-end of High Holborn) was as much in one of the chief London thoroughfares as Zwemmer's in Charing Cross Road or Hatchard's in Piccadilly; and his wife, through whom he became a Baptist, was the daughter of a London

¹ An old complaint and a just one, *not* invented by Wyndham Lewis. See Leslie's *Handbook For Young Painters* (1854); p. 22 of the edition of 1870.

banker, William Giles. Palmer, as a young man, violently repudiated dissent, sealed his letters with a signet-ring bearing the Palmer coat of arms, and stood upon the ancient traditions of Church and State. These were facts which had to do with the peculiarity of his painting.

By the time Palmer began to paint, nearly sixty years had gone by since Diderot's order 'Soyez ténébreux!' And by this time, in 1823—everything vital in romanticism had been planted or had developed. There were varieties of achievement to come before the slow confusion of decay. The sublime and the picturesque had been painted, and the theories were there for Palmer to read about and the paintings for him to see. The gentle, enthusiastic Winckelmann had been absorbed and Flaxman had cut his firm, thin marble line. The Parthenon sculptures had been purchased. Blake and Fuseli were old men. Coleridge, whom Palmer much admired, had retired to Highgate. In 1823 Palmer met John Linnell, who introduced him to Dürer and, in person, to Blake. He had already been introduced to direct drawing from nature. Linnell and Blake now showed him what he called the grand old men, turned him away from being a 'naturalist', and gave him a religious ideal in his art. The degree of religion in romantic poetry and painting ought to be more thoroughly understood. A mechanical view of God was replaced by an emotional, individual apprehension of God. In Germany Tieck found Jakob Boehme's *Aurora* on a Berlin bookstall, and through him Boehme affected German romantic theory and poetry, and the painting, for instance, of Philip Otto Runge.¹ Coleridge read Boehme and said that Boehme contained all that was in Schelling. Blake read him and said that Boehme contained all that was in Swedenborg, and ten thousand times as much. James Ward was another English artist who knew of Boehme.² I do not know that Palmer makes any certain mention of him, though he may have learned about him through Blake and may easily have known the English translations. Certainly the influence of Boehme, direct or roundabout, did not give him much more—though that was plenty—than a view of nature and man in relation to God. He certainly read Blake's prophetic books and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, but in love with the Church and

¹ See Ludwig Tieck, by Edwin Zeydel (Princeton, 1935).

² See *The New Trial of the Spirits*, by James Ward, R.A. (1835).

teaching and the past, he resisted, or did not explore, Blake's orthodoxy, a resistance for which he has been pointlessly reproved. But with Boehme and Blake and William Law he saw the terrestrial as the image of the celestial; in his well-known letter to Linnell in 1828 he called creation 'the veil of Heaven, through which her divine features are dimly smiling; the setting of the table before the feast; the symphony before the tune; the prologue of the drama; a dream, and antepast, and proscenium of eternity.' Compare with this Blake's 'Imagination, the real and eternal world of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow' (*Jerusalem*), or Boehme: 'When thou beholdest this world thou hast a type of heaven'—'View this world diligently and consider what manner of fruit, sprouts, and branches grow out of the Salitter of the earth, from trees, plants, herbs, roots, flowers, oils, wines, corn, and whatever else there is that thy heart may find out; all is a type of the heavenly pomp' (*Aurora, or Morning-Rednesse in the Rising of The Sun*: Sparrow's translation 1666).

However he came by them, Palmer's idealism, his humility, his dependence on God, are spiritually in the temper of this German mystic;¹ and upon knowledge of these beliefs depends a full appreciation of all Palmer's finest work. It was religious work. He got up with terrors in the morning, fought against the Devil, prayed for the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and found himself comforted by the peace of God in the summer twilights at Shoreham, which he loved best of all hours of the day. He resisted, not only Blake's unorthodoxy, but also the extremity of Blake's (and Shelley's) opposition to nature, while believing with them that 'the Great First Cause is the essential vivifying spirit, vital spark, embalming breath . . . of the finest art'. He felt that his intense studies of nature—for instance of the huge oaks still growing in Lullingstone Park—were a contradiction of Blake, but one which he justified to himself in which he continued; and he came to understand landscape,

There may even be a link between Palmer and Wackenroder, Tieck's friend, who preached humility before masterpieces, and especially before Dürer. Palmer knew Charles Aders, the German merchant in the City, or had at least seen his remarkable collection of early German masters, as he told Crabbe and Emerson. The Aderses' friends included not only Blake, Linnell, James Ward, Wordsworth, Coleridge, but the Schlegels. It seems to me certain that the Aderses must have passed on to English painters some knowledge of the mysticism of the German romantics.

especially landscape looking into infinity from a high ridge hills, as a symbol of the promise of futurity—of eternal life. Of the poems he wrote, but did not always complete, in his Shoreham notebooks, only one, so far as I know, has survived. It has not been published, but here it is, as the best of glosses upon the sepias and landscapes of Shoreham twilight:

And now the trembling light
Glimmers behind the little hills and corn,
Ling'ring as loth to part; yet part thou must
And though than open day far pleasing more
(Ere yet the fields and pearlèd cups of flowers
Twinkle in the parting light;)

Thee night shall hide, sweet visionary gleam
That softly lookest through the rising dew;

Till all like silver bright,
The faithful witness, pure and white,
Shall look o'er yonder grassy hill,
At this village, safe and still.

All is safe and all is still,
Save what noise the watch-dog makes
Or the shrill cock the silence breaks.

Now and then—

And now and then—

Hark! Once again,

The wether's bell

To us doth tell

Some little stirring in the fold.

Methinks the ling'ring dying ray

Of twilight time, doth seem more fair,

And lights the soul up more than day

When wide-spread sultry sunshines are:

Yet all is right and all most fair,

For thou, dear God, hast formèd all;

Thou deckest every little flower,

Thou girdest every planet ball,

And mark'st when sparrows fall.

This, I believe, was written in 1825, when Palmer was twenty, and in the hot summer in which he painted the exquisite designs first illustrated by Mr. Sturge Moore a few years ago in *Apollo*.¹

¹ *Apollo*: December 1936.



Drawing by Samuel Palmer: sepia and Indian ink. 1825

Size $9\frac{3}{16}$ " \times $7\frac{7}{16}$ ". Ashmolean Museum

*I arose anone and thought I would gone
Into the woodes to hear the birdes singe,
When that the misty vapour was agone
And cleare and faire was the morninge.*

CHAUCER



Drawing by Samuel Palmer: sepia and Indian ink, 1825

Palmer's political, religious and artistic beliefs and practice were, and need to be considered with the years through which he lived. He grew up in the turbulent and uneasy peace, when, after 1815, all the hammers of change were sounding, building and breaking, and when the reform was threatened, in Church and State, of institutions which, Palmer felt, contained the essence and goodness of life. Blake and Linnell and Fuseli turned him from modern painting to Dürer, Van Leyden, Claude, Rembrandt, Heimer, Michelangelo, and the engraver Bonasoni, a taste for which he shared with Linnell and Blake's friend, the poisoner Wainwright.¹ Blake—above all Blake's Virgil woodcuts—and Linnell, and his own predilection, and the unsettlement of the twenties and 'thirties, turned him to the primitivism of a Christianity of gold, different from what he called the 'flashy distracted present' (1823), and 'the wretched moderns and their spiders' webs and their feasts on empty wind, thistles and dung' (1824). These were his texts at this time (and always): 'The earth is full of thy richness' and 'the moon also to rule by night, for his mercy endureth for ever.' The party in the Church most in tune with these visionary realities was, to him, the Anglican Church of his fathers, the Church of spires under the steep slopes of the Kentish Downs; and the political party, the High Tories. The repeal of disabilities on dissenters (1828) upset him as much as it upset the ageing Lord Eldon. Like Constable and Coleridge, he dreaded, as I shall explain in a minute, the Reform Bill. Rick burning, riots, machine-breaking, the wild speculation and greed and collapse of 1824-1826—all such things could be put down to the agitation of mobs and dissenters and the influence of the new money-makers who were proposed to enfranchise. And the riots and the mutterings of change were accompanied by earthquakes, eruptions, disasters, and by the storms which broke up the hot English summers of 1825 and 1826, and showed Palmer those rising, swelling, immense clouds he so often drew. There was the portent of the coming—the crowded chapel, the apocalyptic sermons of this latter-day prophet of the millennium, with his presence, his black hair falling on to his shoulders, the unearthly shrieks of his company. Blake, Coleridge, Carlyle and many others thought only of Irving, whom Blake called a sent man, adding that such men sometimes went too far. The counterpart of his

¹ *Essays and Criticisms of Thomas Griffiths Wainwright* (1880), p. 40 seq.

sermons (by which artists were much attracted) were the w apocalyptic canvases of Danby and Martin (Martin was Reformer and a Radical), in which lightnings split the sky, writing appeared on the wall, and the last moon sank in blood. One did not need to be what Palmer called himself, a 'quake-crinkle-crinkle Goth', to be uneasy and apprehensive. Palmer, not under the compulsion of time, saw, as we may now really the evil course of things; and this blinded him to the immediate necessity of reforming what had outlived its virtue or its expediency. But more ordinary, harder-headed men than Palmer, better disposed towards reform, felt the earthquakes and the uncertainty as much. Harriet Martineau, in her *History of the Peace*, quoted Arnold of Rugby, who thought, whether Irving's activities were a real sign or no, that the day of the Lord was coming 'i.e. termination of one of the great αἰῶνες of the human race. . . The termination of the Jewish αἰὼν in the first century, and the Roman αἰὼν in the fifth and sixth, were each marked by the same concurrence of calamities, wars, tumults, pestilences, earthquakes, etc., all marking the time of one of God's peculiar seasons of visitation.' Arnold ended this letter (October 25th 1831), 'We talk, as much as we dare talk of anything two months distant, going to the Lakes in the winter. . . .'¹

If Palmer's early sketchbooks or notebooks—the two were combined—had not been burnt, all save one, and if more of his early correspondence had survived, we should have had incomparable evidence of a perturbed soul at one of the climaxes of English life and art. A letter, unpublished, does remain, which he sent to George Richmond in 1828, from Shoreham:

'Politics we dabble in: Mr. L[innell], though of no party, magnifies the peasants; I, also, as you know, of no party, as I love our fine British peasantry, think best of the old high Tories because I find they gave most liberty to the poor, and were not morose, sullen and bloodthirsty like the Whigs, liberty jacks and dissenters; whose cruelty when they reign'd was as bad as that of the worst times of the worst papists; only more sly and smoothlier varnish'd over with a thin shew of reason. Church Theology, and church government, we keep up a perpetual running fight: I am for high church and the less of State expediency and money mix'd up with it the better.'

¹ Stanley's *Life of Arnold*, 12th ed., Vol. 1, p. 266.

As the years moved on to the final passage of the Reform Bill, Palmer's fanaticism grew still more fanatic. His whole art, all the work he had done, all the moons, and leaves against the evening or morning light, all his rich fruit trees, and oaks, and thatched golden roofs, and round hills and spires, his reading of the Christian Fathers, the English divines, and the poets, his feeling for the pure and primitive, his love for Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher, all his visionary years at Shoreham, fought on his side against the Reform Bill. If it was passed, it would be the beginning of the new century, the new αἰὼν, and the end of an epoch in Palmer's life.

The ricks burnt around Shoreham, within sight of Palmer's house, under the moons that he had painted broad and full. The moons charmed away neither fire nor reform, and on June 4th, 1832, the Reform Bill was passed the House of Lords. The Anti-Reformers still saw some last hope in the General Election which followed in December, and while purple banners were being stitched for the Tory candidate in West Kent with the arms of the county, St. George and the Dragon and 'King and Constitution', Palmer left painting to gesticulate in print against the change and the future. He wrote a violent anonymous pamphlet, printed at Sevenoaks. His son mentions the pamphlet in the 'Life and Letters', but does not quote from it, and I have not found a copy in any public library. But Palmer sent it for review to the Kentish papers, the *Kentish Observer*, the Tory paper, which promised to notice it, and never did, and the Reform paper, the *Kentish Gazette*, which gave it a column of quotation and abuse.¹ The pamphlet was called 'An Address to the Electors of West Kent'—by 'An Elector', and it was extraordinary enough. 'The ravings of this maniac', the *Gazette* called it, believing him at the same time to be a Kentish clergyman. But the ravings are authentic Palmer. Here are some of them:

'It is true we vastly, and beyond comparison outnumber the enemy: but then we are men of peace; and they are beasts of prey. We are strongest by day: they ravine in the night; for their optics are adapted to darkness. And it is now a very dark night for Europe. . . .'

'You will NOT suffer those temples where you received the Christian name to fall an easy prey to sacrilegious plunderers!

¹ No. 1810, December 11th, 1832.

You will NOT let that dust which covers the ashes of your parents be made the filthy track of Jacobinical hyenas!’

‘Landholders, who have estates confiscated, or laid in ashes: Farmers who have free trade and annihilation impending over you: Manufacturers who must be beggared in the bankruptcy of your country: Fundholders, who desire not the *wet sponge*: Britons who have liberty to lose: Christians who have religion to be blasphemed: now is the time for your last struggle!’

He appealed, it is true, for effectual reform ‘in God’s name and the strangling of corruption, ‘but leave not your hearths and altars a prey to the most heartless, the most bloody, most obscene, profane, and atrocious faction which even defied God and insulted humanity’.

The election was not party politics, ‘but Existence, or Annihilation, to good old England!’

It would be too much to say existence or annihilation to Samuel Palmer. But the Tory candidate for West Kent was at the bottom of the poll. The Jacobinical hyenas were in, by their own charter and now began the gradual change and decline of Palmer’s art. Stepped up too high, it fell too low. The change might be compared with the rise and the crash of Edward Irving (who also disapproved of the Reform Bill).¹ To say gradual change perhaps wrong. There was an immediate change, and gradual had better be tacked only to ‘decline’. First, a change of manner. In 1834 Palmer began to break up his life at Shoreham. He had bought a house near Paddington. He began sketching journeys to Devon and to Wales. But he seems a bit uneasily to have found himself to be like Peacock’s modern poet (1820), ‘a semi-barbarian in a civilized community’ who ‘lives in the days that are past. His ideas, thoughts, feelings, associations, are all with barbarous manners, obsolete customs, and exploded superstitions. The march of his intellect is like that of a crab, backward.’ He remained a crab, but he began to convince himself that prudentially (a good adverb of the time) his years had not, altogether, been well spent. ‘It is a very trying situation in which I am at present placed—’ he wrote in October 1834 to his friend George

¹ ‘He objected clearly to my Reform Bill notions, found Democracy a thing forbidden, leading down to outer darkness.’ Carlyle: *Edward Irving*, in *Reminiscences*, Vol. 2 (1881).

Richmond, who was making money and had already come to terms with the new world as a portrait painter, 'wishing as soon as possible to struggle up into repute—I have not the money nor influence to do good with and I am in danger of having all my thoughts and affections absorbed into the means.' His religious fervour was quietening down, its extremity cooling to a tractarian glow. 'I have a slowly but steadily increasing conviction that the religion of Jesus Christ is perfectly divine, but it certainly was not only intended to be enthroned in the understanding but enshrined in the heart, for the personal love of Christ its beginning and end.' In Wales he painted waterfalls and mountains in a cooler, purer tinted, more realistic manner, with an easy, attractive thinness, a physical thinness in contrast to the thick pigments of *A Shoreham Garden*. The water-colours of this time are among the loveliest, though not among the most extraordinary of his works. But few are known, and many seem to be lost. He met Crabb Robinson in Wales in 1836, Robinson being attracted by his 'eye of deep feeling and very capacious forehead' and by his knowledge of Blake. Robinson helped Palmer, thought him 'probably a man of genius for the arts', but disapproved of his views: 'He is so much behind on moral subjects as to disapprove of the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. He believes in Witchcraft.'¹ No doubt by this time Palmer had shaved off the luxuriant beard and clipped the shoulder length curls he had grown at Shoreham in the style of Albert Dürer. The effort to struggle up into repute went on, the art went down. He called on Robinson early in 1837 to inquire about Westmorland waterfalls. But in this year he made two decisions—he decided to marry and he decided to go to Italy. Perhaps it was now, too, that he read, as he afterwards told his patron L. R. Walpole, the essay on 'Decision of Character' in John Foster's *Essays in a Series of Letters to a Friend*. Foster was a Baptist, an admirer, and acquaintance, of Coleridge and a man who succeeded in overcoming his own imagination. His essays were exceedingly popular far on into the new century, and they were a convenient didactic bridge from the old outlook to the new. If Palmer read him on 'Decision of Character', no doubt he read the neighbouring essay on Romanticism, which dealt with the ascendancy of imagination over judgement.' 'Imagination', said

¹ Crabb Robinson's Journal, 19th December 1836. Unpublished entry.

Foster, who had been a romantic himself, 'may be allowed to ascendancy in early youth, the case should always be reversed in mature life; and if it is not, a man should consider his mind as either unfortunately constructed, or unwisely Disciplined.' If Palmer was too romantic and too irresolute, Foster on Decision showed him that he could try, at any rate, to put on the freezing shirt of character. '. . . Though it is improbable that a very irresolute man can ever become an habitually decisive one, it should be observed that as there are many degrees of determined character and some very defective ones, it might be possible to apply discipline which should advance a man from the first degree to the second, and from that to the third, and how much further I cannot tell; he may try.'

Palmer did try. He married unwisely, not merely a wife, but into a family. He married one of the daughters of the eccentric, ruthless, quarrelsome, talented, and detested artist John Linnell. Linnell had decision of character, all right. Though he and Palmer had been close friends, though Palmer owed much to him, though Linnell had been close to Blake, Linnell developed into a suspicious tyrannical, cruel egotist. Primitivism led Palmer to High Church and to some sympathies for the Oxford Movement (which had started to take shape after the Reform Bill). Primitivism led his father-in-law to become a Plymouth Brother, to go into a rage if, on a sketching tour, he saw candlesticks or an altar, to interfere between Palmer and his wife, and to call Palmer derisively and malignantly 'the Jesuit' or 'the Puseyite'. Palmer's wife was puritanical and was never, so her son declared, 'really in sympathy or touch with him.' None of the Linnells understood Palmer or his work; and by his marriage and his association with Linnell he was forced, so his son said again, to spend '42 years in the midst of surroundings which, with a few short exceptions, were hateful to him.' So much for his decision to marry. With his wife he went off to Italy in 1837 for a working honeymoon. Wiser artists resisted that Italian bait. Delacroix never went to Italy, wishing to keep the purity of his own style. Constable, no doubt deliberately, did not go to see the great Italians. Turner went, but, after a bad moment or two, continued to be Turner. Palmer visited Florence and Rome at a time of personal deflation and crisis. Brought up on the lessons of Blake and Fuseli, full of the Italian visions of Claude, expectant of

all the grandeur of the Sistine Chapel, and anxious to continue his climb into repute, Palmer set off from England ready to accept, worship, copy, and slave. He was amazed by the brilliance of Italy, and possessed not so much by Michelangelo and Raphael as by his experience of the Venetian landscape painters.

It is not so easy for us to understand how fatal such trips could be into sharp light and Old Masterland. Our painting since Seurat has been one, on the whole, of shape and surface, not of degrees of atmosphere. A 'composition' can be as well devised in a Glasgow fog as in a Mediterranean olive orchard. The lighting of a dream or an episode in the womb owes little to local peculiarities of sunlight; and what Sickert has called 'the roofy school of Collioure and Fitzroy Street' has dealt more in the generalized (and dull) ordering of tiles and walls, than with aerial subtlety. But things were not so between 1800 and 1840. Palmer's light, noonlight, twilight, or the flush on the summit, the light of Constable or Cotman, or the light of Caspar David Friedrich, was the northern light to which they were habituated and through which they know how to express their vision. Italian light and colour, however justified by too much veneration for holy ground and by the nineteenth-century yearning to be scientific, and 'accurate,' in colour, was alien and fatal to Palmer. In 1835 he had written from Tintern Abbey to George Richmond: 'if you are a Goth, come hither. If you are a pure Greek take a cab and make a sketch of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, before breakfast.' In 1839 he wrote to Richmond from Florence: 'I have been lately wholly absorbed in meditation and study of the ancient art of landscape as practised by Titian, Giorgione, etc., and am scarcely able to think of anything else¹—it has worked and is working a complete renovation of my tastes and habits of thought—and appears to me so uncongenial with the most talented efforts of English art—never as they are, that I am really afraid to come within the reducing atmosphere of living talent—knowing by experience its exciting and intoxicating influence.'

And when he came back he began that long series of primitive and pastoral subjects in a mixed manner of Italian light, Venetian colour, and English scenery, with which Palmer tried the

¹ A long remove from Blake, who detested the 'Venetian demons'. But then Palmer had shown his independence long before by admiring, as well as Nature, the 'most outrageous demon Rubens'.

tumbler's job of being true to himself, to his past, to Italy, and the market.

Palmer did not become so soft and dull a painter as some people maintain. He had been too talented and was too sensitive. Some of his Italian watercolours I have seen are good (particularly the one that he made cool and 'English', like Turner's lovely sketches of Rome); and behind his hot Venetian pastorals were always, through his life, skilful, exquisite drawings. In his over-praised etchings, too, tenderness and depth struggle with a soft, blurry pastoral formula, part English, part Virgilian. Palmer did not surrender to the nineteenth century. He went on—in spite of his practice, in spite of the Venetians—admiring all he admired at Shoreham, Blake, Bonasoni, Fuseli, Claude, Elsheimer. He went on admiring excess and fanaticism as principles for an artist—in spite of Foster's essays. He went on being a Christian, inclining towards the Oxford Movement¹ and he did not add an expedient or superficial morality. But he missed the fullness of life, shut, or limited, it would be fairer to say, both his eyes and his mind, turned his powerful bias into prejudice, and prejudice into dogma. He had been a considerable artist because for some fourteen years he had harmonized in a passionate, headlong expression the ideas he felt with the things he saw, the earthly things made in the image of Paradise.² He failed when that harmony failed. He heeded Foster's shrewd warning not to indulge the imagination, did not trust in himself, and by trying to avoid indulgence, drifted into the final state which Foster described: 'The whole mind may become at length something like a hemisphere of cloud scenery, filled with an ever-moving train of changing, melting forms, of every colour, mingled with rainbows, meteors, and an occasional gleam of pure sunlight, *all vanishing away, the mental like this natural imagery, when its hour is up, without leaving anything behind but the wish to recover the vision.*'³

¹ Palmer's intimate friend and cousin, John Giles, went from being a Baptist nearly over to Rome, 'nibbled at' through life by Cardinal Manning.

² There is a lesson on the importance and quality of beliefs in these two things: (i) that Palmer ground his own expensive colours at Shoreham, wanting them to be, as they still are, durable to the glory of God; (ii) that pictures by the great art-worldly Reynolds drip and fade, and many pictures by the Radical sensationist, Martin, have long ago gone black. But I do not mean that painters of the Euston Road school should go off and read Boehme.

³ Did Palmer ever admit that his Shoreham years produced the deepest

No doubt Palmer was buried under the changes of the 'thirties and also under the nineteenth century in his prim Surrey villa, but his spiritual and imaginative stamina, and not history, were to blame. He had gone outside his call as a painter, had tied his talent too close to religion and politics, and his talent suffered with the kick to his political faith and the inescapable cooling of his religious flame. He did not develop, that is the trouble. Better to have gone mad, and developed in the madhouse as Clare developed,—

I loved, but woman fell away;
 I hid me from her faded flame.
 I snatched the sun's eternal ray
 And wrote till earth was but a name.

In every language upon earth,
 On every shore, o'er every sea,
 I gave my name immortal birth
 And kept my spirit with the free—

than to have hatched his spirit with the maids and scones in the prison of his villa, guarded by conifers and begonias. He did not yield to the century. No, but he did not grasp it, use it and overcome it. He did not gain the deep, necessary worldliness of a Delacroix. He became peculiar and ineffectual, a disappointed eccentric. 'Anyone can have talent when he is five and twenty,' said Degas, 'the thing is to have talent when you are fifty.' Palmer's talent might have had better chances of that survival had he belonged, not to his own twilight generation, but to the slightly older, worldlier generation of Keats, Delacroix and Danby, or the slightly younger generation of Tennyson, Madox Brown, and Gautier (how would he have taken Gautier's preface to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* with its fun against the new morality, the poetry of Catholicism, and the painters of the Angelic School?). But might have beens are all barren—barren except as definitions of what was; and Palmer was an absorbed, but limited visionary: he stood out for one moment in the glide of a free, full romanticism

painting of his life? I do not think so. He still praised fanaticism, but was diffident about his own fanatic past. I have just seen some notes of his written for a pupil in 1856: 'When [you] see anything *very* rich, put it into drawing at once—but only a little. Nature, never strong in extremes—fault of young artists [to be] struck with richness of nature.'

in firm possession of ideas (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake) towards sentimental romanticism, approved by morality and devoid of ideas, or towards that romanticism of defiant sensation, which grew in the air like a fine orchid without root. Palmer believed in the mystery of God. Rossetti believed in mystery. Sir William Blake Richmond, R.A., son of Palmer's friend, son of the successful Victorian portrait-painter who watched Blake sing himself into death and then closed his eyes—follower-on of the Pre-Raphaelites—he believed in smooth, elongated prettiness from which all mystery had been squashed and squeezed.

The wheel had turned completely, for it was also Sir William Blake Richmond who was outraged upon inherited principles when an uncompromising truth and worldliness came back to England with Whistler, with Degas, and with Sickert.

NOTE. The authorities for Samuel Palmer's Life are (1) *The Memoir of Samuel Palmer* (1882) by A. H. Palmer; (2) *The Life and Letters of Samuel Palmer* (1892), by A. H. Palmer; (3) *Catalogue of the Samuel Palmer Exhibition*, introduced by A. H. Palmer, Victoria and Albert Museum (1926); (4) *Memoir of Edward Calvert* (1893), by Samuel Calvert; (5) *Life of John Linnell* (1892), by A. T. Story; (6) *The Richmond Papers* (1926), edited by A. M. W. Stirling. Mr. Binyon's *Followers of William Blake* (1926) is a picture-book. I am grateful for unpublished letters to Mr. John Richmond, Mr. Martin Hardie, Mrs. F. L. Griggs, and Mr. Wright, and for information of various kinds to descendants of John Linnell. Particulars of the Palmer family come from wills at Somerset House. I also thank the authorities of Dr. Williams's Library for leave to consult Crabb Robinson's journal and note-books.

EVELYN WAUGH

MY FATHER'S HOUSE¹

My father, it appeared, had been knocked down by a baker's van and had died without regaining consciousness. I was his only child and, with the exception of my uncle, his only near relative. All arrangements had been made. The funeral was taking place that day. *'In spite of your father's opinions, in the absence of any formal instructions to the contrary,'* my Uncle Andrew wrote, *'your Aunt and I thought it best to have a religious ceremony of an unostentatious kind.'*

'He might have telegraphed,' I thought; and then, later, 'Why should he have?' There was no question of my having been able to see my father before he died; participation in a 'religious ceremony of an unostentatious kind' was neither in my line nor my father's; nor—to do him justice—in my Uncle Andrew's. It would satisfy the Jellabys.

With regard to the Jellabys, my father always avowed a ruthlessness which he was far from practising; he would, in fact, put himself to considerable inconvenience to accommodate them, but in principle he abhorred any suggestion of discretion or solicitude. It was his belief that no one but himself dealt properly with their servants. Two attitudes drove him to equal fury: what he called the *pas-davant* tomfoolery of his childhood—the precept that scandal and the mention of exact sums of money should be hushed in their presence—or the more recent idea that their quarters should be prettily decorated and themselves given opportunity for cultural development. 'Jellaby has been with me twenty years,' he would say, 'and is fully cognisant of the facts of life. He and Mrs. Jellaby know my income to the nearest shilling and they know the full history of everyone who comes to this house. They pay them abominably and they supplement their wages by looking the books. Servants prefer it that way. It preserves their independence and self-respect. The Jellabys eat continually, sleep with the windows shut, go to church every Sunday morning and to chapel in the evening, and entertain surreptitiously at my

¹ See 'ABOUT THIS NUMBER', page 302

expense whenever I am out of the house. Jellaby's a teetotal. Mrs. Jellaby takes the port.' He rang the bell whenever he wanted anything fetched from upstairs and sat as long as he wanted on his wine. 'Poor old Armstrong,' he used to say of a fellow Academician, 'lives like a Hottentot. He keeps a lot of twittering women like waitresses in a railway-station buffet. After the first glass of port they open the dining-room door and stick their heads in. After the second glass they do it again. Then instead of throwing something at them, Armstrong says, "I think they want to clear" and we have to move out.' But he had a warm affection for the Jellabys and I believe it was largely on Mrs. Jellaby's account that he allowed himself to be put down for the Academician. They, in their turn, served him faithfully. It would have been a cruel betrayal to deny them a funeral service and I am sure my father had them in mind when he omitted any provision against it in his will. He was an exact man who would not have forgotten a point of that kind. On the other hand he was a dogmatic atheist of the old-fashioned cast and would not have set anything down which might be construed as apostasy. He had left it to Uncle Andrew's tact. No doubt, too, it was part of my uncle's tact to save me the embarrassment of being present.

* * * * *

I sat on my verandah for some time, smoking and considering the situation in its various aspects. There seemed no good reason for a change of plan. My Uncle Andrew would see everything. The Jellabys would be provided for. Apart from them my father had no obligations. His affairs were always simple and in good order. The counterfoils of his cheques and his own excellent memory were his only account books; he had never owned any investments except the freehold of the house in St. John's Wood which he had bought with the small capital still left him by my mother. He lived up to his income and saved nothing. In him the parsimony which I had inherited took the form of a Gallic repugnance to paying direct taxes or, as he preferred it, to subscribing to 'the support of the politicians'. He had, moreover, the conviction that anything he put by would be filched by the Radicals. Lloyd George's ascent to power was the last contemporary event to impress him. Since then he believed or professed to believe, that public life had become an open conspiracy for the destruction of himself and his class. This class,

which he considered himself the sole survivor, and its ways were for him the object of romantic loyalty; he spoke of it as a Jacobite clan proscribed and dispersed after Culloden, in a way which sometimes embarrassed those who did not know him well. 'We have been uprooted and harried,' he would say. 'There are only three classes in England now, politicians, tradesmen, and slaves.' Then he would particularize. 'Seventy years ago the politicians and the tradesmen were in alliance; they destroyed the gentry by destroying the value of land; some of the gentry became politicians themselves, others tradesmen; out of what was left they created the new class into which I was born, the moneyless, landless, educated gentry who managed the country for them. My grandfather was a Canon of Christ Church, my father was in the Bengal Civil Service. The capital they left their sons was their education and their moral principles. Now the politicians are in alliance with the slaves to destroy the tradesmen. They don't need to bother about us. We are extinct already, I am a Dodo,' he used to say, defiantly staring at his audience. 'You, my poor son, are a petrified egg.' There is a caricature of him by Max Beerbohm, in this posture, saying these words.

My father seldom referred to his contemporaries without the epithet 'old'—usually as 'poor old so-and-so', unless they had prospered conspicuously, when they were 'that old humbug'. On the other hand he spoke of men a few years his junior as 'whipper-snappers' and 'young puppies'. The truth was that he could not bear to think of anyone as being the same age as himself. It was all part of the aloofness that was his dominant concern in life. It was enough for him to learn that an opinion of his had popular support for him to question and abandon it. His atheism was his response to the simple piety and confused agnosticism of his family circle. He never came to hear much about Marxism; had he done so he would, I am sure, have discovered a number of proofs of the existence of God. In his later years I observed two reversions of opinion in reaction to contemporary fashion. In my boyhood, at the time of their Edwardian popularity, he denounced the Jews roundly on all occasions, and later attributed to them the blame for Post-impressionist painting—'There was a poor booby called Cézanne, a kind of village idiot who was given a box of paints to keep him quiet. He very properly left his horrible canvases behind him in the hedges. The Jews discovered him and

crept round behind him picking them up—just to get something for nothing. Then when he was safely dead and couldn't share the profits they hired a lot of mercenary lunatics to write him. They've made thousands out of it.' To the last he maintained that Dreyfus had been guilty, but when, in the early 'thirties, anti-Semitism showed signs of becoming a popular force, he justly pointed out in an unpublished letter to the *Times*, that prime guilt in that matter lay with Gentile Prussians.

Similarly he was used to profess an esteem for Roman Catholics. 'Their religious opinions are preposterous,' he said. 'But so were those of the ancient Greeks. Think of Socrates spending half his last evening babbling about the topography of the nether world. Grant them their first absurdities and you will find Roman Catholics a reasonable people—and they have civilized habits.' Later, however, when he saw signs of this view gaining acceptance, he became convinced of the existence of a Jesuit conspiracy to embroil the world in war, and wrote several letters to the *Times* on the subject; they, too, were unpublished. But in neither of these periods did his opinions greatly affect his personal relations: Jews and Catholics were among his closest friends all his life.

My father dressed as he thought a painter should, in a distinctive and recognizable garb which made him a familiar and, in his later years, a venerable figure as he took his exercise in the streets round his house. There was no element of ostentation in his poncho capes, check suits, sombrero hats and stock ties. It was rather that he thought it fitting for a man to proclaim unequivocally his station in life, and despised those of his colleagues who seemed to be passing themselves off as guardsmen and stockbrokers. In general he liked his fellow academicians, though I never heard him express anything but contempt for their work. He regarded the Academy as a club; he enjoyed the dinners and frequently attended the schools, where he was able to state his views on art in Johnsonian terms. He never doubted that the function of painting was representational. He criticized his colleagues for such faults as incorrect anatomy, 'triviality' and 'insincerity'. For this he was loosely spoken of as a Conservative, but that he never was where his art was concerned. He abominated the standards of his youth. He must have been an insignificant old-fashioned young man, for he was brought up in the

ney-day of Whistlerian decorative painting and his first exhibited work was of a balloon ascent in Manchester—a large canvas crowded with human drama, in the manner of Frith. His practice was chiefly in portraits—many of them posthumous—for presentation to Colleges and Guildhalls. He seldom succeeded with women, whom he endowed with a statuesque absurdity which was half deliberate, but given the robes of a Doctor of Music or a Knight of Malta and he would do something fit to hang with the best panelling in the country; given some whiskers and he was a master. 'As a young man I specialized in hair,' he would say, rather as a doctor might say he specialized in noses and throats. 'I paint it incomparably. Nowadays nobody has any to paint,' and it was this aptitude of his which led him to the long increasingly unsaleable series of historical and scriptural groups, and the scenes of domestic melodrama by which he is known—subjects which had already become slightly ludicrous when he was in his cradle, but which he continued to produce year after year, while experimental painters came and went until, right at the end of his life, he suddenly, without realizing it, found himself in the fashion. The first sign of this was in 1929 when his 'Agag before Samuel' was bought at a provincial exhibition for 50 guineas. It was a large canvas at which he had been at work intermittently since 1908. Even he spoke of it, with conscious understatement, as 'something of a white elephant'. White elephants, indeed, were almost the sole species of four-footed animals that were not, somewhere, worked into this elaborate composition. When asked why he had introduced such a variety of fauna, he replied, 'I'm sick of Samuel. I've lived with him for twenty years. Every time it comes back from an exhibition I paint out a Jew and put in an animal. If I live long enough I'll have Noah's ark in its background.'

The purchaser of this work was Sir Lionel Sterne.

'Honest Sir Lionel,' said my father, as he saw the great canvas packed off to Kensington Palace Gardens. 'I should dearly have liked to shake his hairy paw. I can see him well—a fine, meaty fellow with a great gold watchchain across his belly, who's been recently employed boiling soap or smelting copper all his life, with no time to read Clive Bell. In every age it has been men like him who kept painting alive.'

I tried to explain that Lionel Sterne was the youthful and

elegant millionaire who for ten years had been a leader in æsthetic fashion. 'Nonsense!' said my father. 'Fellows like that collect disjointed negresses by Gauguin. Only Philistines like my work and, by God, I only like Philistines.'

There was also another, rather less reputable side to my father's business. He received a regular yearly retaining fee from Goodchild and Godley, the Duke Street dealers, for what was called 'restoration'. This sum was a very important part of his income; without it the comfortable little dinners, the trips abroad, the cabs to and fro between St. John's Wood and the Athenæum, the faithful, predatory Jellabys, the orchid in his buttonhole—all the substantial comforts and refinements which endeared the work and provided him with his air of gentlemanly ease—would have been impossible to him. The truth was that, while excelling in helix, my father could paint, very passably, in the manner of almost any of the masters of English portraiture, and the private and public collections of the New World were richly representative of his versatility. Very few of his friends knew the traffic; to those who did, he defended it with complete candour. 'Goodchild and Godley buy these pictures for what they are—my own work. They pay me no more than my dexterity merits. What they do with them afterwards is their own business. It would ill become me to go officiously about the markets identifying my own handicrafts and upsetting a number of perfectly contented people. It is a great deal better for them to look at beautiful pictures and enjoy them under a misconception about the date, than to make themselves dizzy by goggling at genuine Picassos.'

It was largely on account of his work for Goodchild and Godley that his studio was strictly reserved as a workshop. It was a separate building approached through the garden and it was excluded from general use. Once a year, when he went abroad, it was 'done out'; once a year, on the Sunday before the sending-in day at the Royal Academy, it was open to his friends. He took a peculiar pleasure from the gloom of these annual tea-parties and was at the same pains to make them dismal as he was on all other occasions to enliven his entertainments. There was a species of dry, bright-yellow, caraway cake which was known to my childhood as 'Academy cake', which appeared then, and only then, from a grocer in Praed Street; there was a

ormous Worcester tea-service—a wedding present—which was known as 'Academy cups'; there were 'Academy sandwiches'—square, triangular and quite tasteless. All these things were part of my earliest memories. I do not know at what date these parties changed from being a rather tedious convention to what they certainly were to my father at the end of his life, a huge, grim and military jest. If I was in England I was required to attend and to bring a friend or two. It was difficult, until the last two years when, as I have said, my father became the object of fashionable interest, to collect guests. 'When I was a young man,' my father said, sardonically surveying the company, 'there were twenty or more of these parties in St. John's Wood alone. People of culture drove round from three in the afternoon to six, from Camden Hill to Hampstead. To-day I believe our little gathering is the sole survivor of that deleterious tradition.'

On these occasions his year's work—Goodchild and Godley's names excepted—would be ranged round the studio on mahogany easels; the most important work had a wall to itself against a background of scarlet rep. I had been present at the last of the parties the year before. The recollection was remarkable. Lionel Lincolne was there, Lady Metroland and a dozen fashionable connoisseurs. My father was at first rather suspicious of his new guests and suspected an impertinent intrusion into his own private joke, a calling of his bluff of seed-cake and cress sandwiches; but their commissions reassured him. People did not try a joke to such extravagant lengths. Mrs. Algernon Stitch paid 500 guineas for his picture of the year—a tableau of contemporary life conceived and painted with elaborate mastery. My father attached great importance to suitable titles for his work, and after toying with 'The People's Idol', 'Feet of Clay', 'Not the First Night', 'Their Night of Triumph', 'Success and Failure', 'Not Invited', 'Also Present'; he finally called this picture rather enigmatically 'The Neglected Cue'. It represented the dressing-room of a leading actress at the close of a triumphant night. She sat at the dressing-table, her back turned on the company and her face visible in the mirror, momentarily relaxed from fatigue. Her protector, with proprietary swagger, was filling her glasses for a circle of admirers. In the background the dresser conversed in colloquy at the half-open door with an elderly couple of provincial appearance; it is evident from their costume that they

have seen the piece from the cheaper seats and a commission stands behind them uncertain whether he did right in admitting them. He did not do right: they are her old parents arriving inopportunely. There was no questioning Mrs. Stitch's rapturous enjoyment of her acquisition.

I was never to know how my father would react to his vogue. He could paint in any way he chose; perhaps he would have embarked on those vague assemblages of picnic litter which were used to cover the walls of the Mansard Gallery in the early 'twenties; he might have retreated to the standards of the Grosvenor Galleries in the 'nineties. He might, perhaps, have found popularity less unacceptable than he supposed, and allowed himself a luxurious and cosseted old age. He died with his picture still unfinished. I saw its early stage on my last visit to him; it represented an old shipwright pondering on the dockyard where lay the great skeleton of the Cunarder that was later to be known as the *Queen Mary*. It was to have been called 'Too big?' My father had given the man a grizzled beard and was revelling in it. That was the last time I saw him.

I had given up living in St. John's Wood for four or five years. There was never a definite moment when I 'left home'. For official purposes the house remained my domicile. There was a bedroom that was known as mine; I kept several trunks full of clothes there and a shelf or two of books. I never set up for myself anywhere else, but during the last five years of my father's life I do not suppose I slept ten nights under his roof. This was due to any estrangement. I enjoyed his company and he seemed to enjoy mine; had I settled there permanently, with a servant of my own and a separate telephone number, we might have lived together comfortably enough, but I was never in London more than a week or two at a time and I found that as an occasional visitor I strained and upset my father's household. and they tried to do too much, and he liked to have his plans clear for some way ahead. 'My dear boy,' he would say on the first evening, 'Please do not misunderstand me. I hope you will stay as long as you possibly can, but I do wish to know whether you will still be here on Thursday the fourteenth, and if so whether you will be in to dinner.' So I took to staying at my club or with more casual hosts, and to visiting St. John's Wood often as I could, but with formal prearrangement.

Nevertheless, I realized, the house had been an important part of my life. It had remained unaltered for as long as I could remember. It was a decent house, built in 1840 or thereabouts, in the contemporary Swiss mode of stucco and ornamental weatherboards, one of a street of similar, detached houses when I first saw it. By the time of my father's death the transformation of the district, though not complete, was painfully evident. The skyline of the garden was broken on three sides by blocks of flats. The first of them drove my father into a frenzy of indignation. He wrote to the *Times* about it, addressed a meeting of ratepayers and for six weeks sported a board advertising the house for sale. At the end of that time he received a liberal offer from the syndicate, who wished to extend their block over the site, and he immediately withdrew it from the market. 'I could tell they were Jews', he said, 'by the smell of their notepaper.'

This was in his anti-Semitic period; it was also the period of his lowest professional fortunes, when his subject pictures remained unsold, the market for dubious old masters was dropping, and public bodies were beginning to look for something 'modern' in their memorial portraits; the period, moreover, when I had finished with the University and was still dependent on my father for pocket money. It was a very unsatisfactory time in his life. I had not then learned to appreciate the massive defences of what people call the 'border line of sanity' and I was at moments genuinely afraid that my father was going out of his mind; there had always seemed an element of persecution mania about his foibles which might, at a time of great strain, go beyond his control. He used to stand on the opposite pavement watching the new building rise, a conspicuous figure muttering objurgations. He used to imagine scenes in which a policeman would ask him to move on and be met with a wild outburst. I imagined these scenes vividly—my father in swirling cape being hustled off, leaving his umbrella. Nothing of the kind occurred. My father, for all his oddity, was a man of indestructible sanity, and in his later years he found a keen pleasure in contemplating the rapid deterioration of the hated buildings. 'Very good news of Hill Street Court,' he announced one day, 'Typhoid and rats.' And on another occasion, 'Jellaby reports the presence of tarts at St. Asface's. They'll have a suicide there soon, you'll see.' There was a suicide, and for two rapturous days my father watched the

coming and going of police and journalists. After that few chintz curtains were visible in the windows, rents began to let and the lift-man smoked on duty. My father observed and gladly noted all these signs. Hill Crest Court changed hands; decorator's, plumber's and electrician's boards appeared all round it; a commissionaire with a new uniform stood at the doors. On the last evening I dined with my father he told me about a visit he had made there, posing as a potential tenant. 'The place is a deserted slum,' he said. 'A miserable, down-at-heel kind of place.' A secretary took me round flat after flat—all empty. There were great cracks in the concrete stuffed up with putty. The hot pipes were cold. The doors jammed. He started asking £300 a year for the best of them and dropped to £175 before I saw the kitchen. Then he made it £150. In the end he proposed what he called "special form of tenancy for people of good social position" and offered to let me live there for a pound a week on condition I turned out if he found someone who was willing to pay the rent. "Strictly between ourselves," he said, "I can promise you I will not be disturbed." Poor beast, I nearly took his flat, he was so paintable.'

Now, I suppose, the house would be sold; another speculation would pull it to pieces; another great, uninhabitable barrack would appear, like a refugee ship in harbour; it would be filled, sold, emptied, resold, refilled, re-emptied, while the concrete got discoloured and the green wood shrank, and the rats crept out in their thousands out of the Metropolitan Railway tunnel; and the trees and gardens all round it disappeared one by one until the place became a working-class district and at last took on a gaiety and life of some sort; until it was condemned by government inspectors and its inhabitants driven further into the country and the process began all over again.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Uncle Andrew gave me the keys of my father's house. I went straight there from lunching with him. The shutters were pulled down and the curtains drawn; the water and electric light were already cut off; all this my uncle had accomplished in a few days. He stumbled among sheeted furniture to the windows and let in the daylight. I went from room to room in this way. The place still retained its own smell—an agreeable, rather stuffy atmosphere.

igar smoke and cantaloup; a masculine smell—women had always seemed a little out of place there, as in a London Club on Coronation Day.

The house was sombre but never positively shabby, so that, I suppose, various imperceptible renovations and replacements must have occurred from time to time. It looked what it was, the house of an unfashionable artist of the 1880's. The curtains and chair-covers were of indestructible Morris tapestry; there were Dutch tiles round the fireplaces; Levantine rugs on the floors; on the walls, Arundel prints, photographs from the old masters, and majolica dishes. The furniture, now shrouded, had the inimitable air of having been in the same place for a generation; it was a harmonious, unobtrusive jumble of inherited rosewood and mahogany, and of inexpensive collected pieces of carved German oak, Spanish walnut, English chests and dressers, copper ewers and brass candlesticks. Every object was familiar and yet so much part of its surroundings that later, when they came to be moved, I found a number of things which I barely recognized. Books, of an antiquated sort, were all over the house in a variety of hanging, standing and revolving shelves.

I opened the French windows in my father's study and stepped down into the garden. There was little of Spring to be seen here. The two plane trees were bare; under the sooty laurels last year's leaves lay rotting. It was never a garden of any character. Once, before the flats came, we used to dine there sometimes, in extreme discomfort under the catalpa tree; for years now it had been a no-man's-land isolating the studio at the further end; on one side, behind a trellis, were some neglected frames and beds where my father had once tried to raise French vegetables. The mottled concrete of the flats, with its soil pipes and fire escapes and its rash of iron-framed casement windows, shut off half the sky. The tenants of these flats were forbidden, in their leases, to do their laundry, but the owners had long since despaired of a genteel appearance, and you could tell which of the rooms were occupied by the stockings hanging to dry along the window-sills.

In his death my father's privacy was still respected and no one had laid dustsheets in the studio. '*Too Big?*' stood as he had left it on the easel. More than half was finished. My father made copious and elaborate studies for his pictures and worked quickly when he came to their final stage, painting over a monochrome

sketch, methodically, in fine detail, left to right across the canvas as though he were lifting the backing of a child's 'transfer'. 'Transfer your thinking *first*,' he used to tell the Academy students. 'Don't muddle it out on the canvas. Have the whole composition clear in your head before you start,' and if anyone objected that this was seldom the method of the greatest masters, he would say 'You're here to become Royal Academicians, not great masters. This was the way Ford Madox Brown worked and it will be a great day for English art when one of you is half as good as he was. If you want to write books on Art, trot round Europe studying the Rubenses, If you want to learn to paint, watch me.' The four or five square feet of finished painting were a monument of my father's art. There had been a time when I had scant respect for it. Lately I had come to see that it was more than a mere matter of dexterity and resolution. He had an historic position, for he completed a period of English painting that through other circumstances had never, until him, come to maturity. Phrases, though for an obituary article, came to my mind—' . . . fulfilling the broken promise of the young Millais . . . Winter halter suffused with the spirit of Dickens . . . English painting as it might have been, had there not been any Aesthetic Movement . . . the age of the Prince Consort in contrast to the age of Victoria . . . ' and with the phrases my esteem for my father took form and my sense of loss became tangible and permanent.

No good comes of this dependence on verbal forms. It saves nothing in the end. Suffering is none the less acute and much more lasting when it is put into words. In the house my memories had been all of myself—of the countless homecomings and departures of thirty-three years, of adolescence like a stained tablecloth—but in the studio my thoughts were of my father, and grief, nearly a week delayed, overtook and overwhelmed me. It had been delayed somewhat by the strangeness of my surroundings and the business of travel, but most by this literary habit; it had lacked words. Now the words came; I began, in my mind, to lament my father with prose cadences and classical allusions, addressing, as it were, a funeral oration to my own literary memories, and sorrow dammed and canalized, flowed fast.

For the civilized man there are none of those swift transitions of joy and pain which possess the savage; words form slowly like pus about his hurts; there are no clean wounds for him; first a

blindness, then a long festering, then a scar ever ready to reopen. Not until they have assumed the livery of the defence can his notions pass through the lines; sometimes they come massed in a wooden horse, sometimes as single spies, but there is always a fifth Column among the garrison ready to receive them. A spy-bottle behind the lines, a blind raised and lowered at a lighted window, a wire cut, a bolt loosened, a file disordered—that is how the civilized man is undone.

I returned to the house and darkened the rooms once more, laid the dust-sheets I had lifted and left everything as it had been.

LETTER FROM FRANCE—II

(JULY)

DEAREST COMRADE, I had meant to write to you again sooner and had hoped to reach you through a better and safer channel. But this has failed, so I am trying the ordinary post again. It seems practicable.

Well, things have indeed happened since my last letter, which is now pretty much out of date. It is difficult to tell which sort of things you are better and which sort less well informed about than we are, as far as French affairs are concerned. No doubt you have much more serious information than we have about many things, still even our wilder gossip and rumours may give you an impression of the general atmosphere; so here is a rather random account of things as I see them now. First and foremost as to general public opinion. My last letter was written when opinion was crystallizing after the first stunning effects of the catastrophe. Now, in spite of wild fluctuations of hope and fear there can no longer be any doubt that 80 per cent of the population in the occupied zone (even according—I have this on the best authority—to official Vichy police reports) and by unanimous consent 99 per cent in the occupied zone are anti-German and pro-British. Hope reached its height at the moment of the Yugoslav *coup d'état*, when there was a real wave of enthusiasm throughout the country. The demonstrations at Marseilles were very violent. Then depression supervened again at the German successes in the Balkans. Now this is passing away again, especially

since the attack on Russia. What is more, in spite of all purge, the administrations, the Civil Service, the police, the army and even the government itself are riddled with Gaullistes or semi-Gaullistes. The small percentage who are pro-German are so not of course, out of love of Hitler, but because they are afraid the collapse would bring about a European revolution. Most 'Gaullistes' (I use the word in rather a wide sense) think this is idiotic but I am not sure it is quite as idiotic as they think. But it is absurd to view the matter as though the masses were on the side of England while the capitalists are on the side of Hitler. Of course there is a pro-Nazi party consisting of some industrialists, some Fascist journalists and some professional gangsters, but it does not seem to be of great importance, and there are many great capitalists and important bourgeois who have been so robbed by the Germans that they are ready to risk the effects of a collapse of Germany and probably count on England to maintain order.

One of the reported capitalist 'resisters' is the great steel magnate of Lorraine. It is true, though, that the masses are against Germany, though of course they function quite differently. They merely long for a British (and American) victory as deliverance from intolerable oppression and suffering. That there is a certain amount of passivity in this attitude can be admitted but I think this is passing away, especially in the occupied zone. In this particular corner of the unoccupied zone feeling is perhaps rather stronger owing to the loathed and despised Italians being as near as Menton. Their débâcle during the winter was enjoyed with savage delight in Nice, and the fête de Jeanne d'Arc was made the occasion of an extraordinary flagging of the town—purely anti-Italian demonstration.

As to the obscure and tortuous policy of Vichy I have no very definite information about it, so I will not go into the subject beyond saying that though many people believe Vichy to be exclusively influenced by terror of the Germans and will do anything to please them, others think (and I rather tend to believe them) that Vichy is playing a double game. Some even go so far as to say that contact with the English and de Gaulle has never been broken off! Be this as it may, the Syrian affair should not doubt not be taken too seriously. At any rate the public as a whole was quite unmoved by that affair and by the flood of propaganda poured out on the occasion by Vichy. Weygand

credited by rumour with strong British leanings and a firm resolve not to give North Africa to the Nazis. He is said to have refused the Syrian command. Darlan is said to be personally anglophobe. The Government is unanimously hated and despised, though Pétain personally has a certain popularity, partly owing to his age and remains of prestige, and partly because since Montoire it is vaguely supposed that while appearing gaga he will really be foxy enough to diddle the Germans and preserve us from their creatures such as Laval, who was loathed and went in fear of his life. There is no doubt a grain of truth in this appreciation. Laval is reported to have said after the failure of Montoire, 'Le Maréchal m'a couillonné!' But Vichy is no doubt too foolish, undecided and cowardly to go very far in cheating the Germans and their agents.

The Vichy régime is certainly a police one, but though it is intolerable, even if one has no definite turn ups with them, to feel the presence of the police everywhere, their noses in one's letters, their ears at one's telephones, and their invisible presence insinuating itself into one's most private affairs and poisoning them, yet Vichy is almost the opposite of a totalitarian state. This monstrous hybrid born of fear, weakness and defeat, dismisses and sends to concentration camps a good deal, but it does not dare execute, and in spite of dismissals much of the police and administration remain unfascised, for one cannot dismiss every one. So although one occasionally hears of people being sent to prison for saying that Pétain is too old, charladies of the more potent type can still, especially in villages, 'emmerder' the Marshal with impunity; and one hears opinions expressed relatively freely at every street corner. An attempt is indeed being made by the Government to organize a kind of amorphous body of *anciens combattants* to act as a sort of ersatz Fascist militia, but, although some people are frightened of it, it does not seem to me very dangerous. It is called the 'Légion Française des Combattants' and everybody agrees that it contains all sorts of people. No doubt there are some real Fascists, but there are also a large number of mere time-servers, small shopkeepers, unemployed, etc., who want to be on good terms with the authorities or get cheap meals. There are also some who join out of mere curiosity 'to see what it's like', and others (possibly communists) who join in order to spy. The

Légionnaires are not supposed to be armed, though no doubt the more serious ones possess arms; they have no uniforms, only badge, and as men who fought in the last war, can be members they are not all young.

The real S.A. spirit too seems to me totally lacking and *en somme* they are asked to unite, not in order to avenge the defeat but to help perpetuate it; this is not surprising. I do not believe a real Fascist striking force can be built up on such a programme. The most unpleasant trait of the Légion is that its more ardent spirits are apt to be amateur informers, and their evidence has the same legal status as that of police officers, and in practice no opposing testimony, however conclusive, is accepted. However, so far most of the Légion's exploits have been of the following type.

The eminent writer, André Gide, who was to have given a lecture in Nice about two months ago on a purely literary subject, received a threatening letter from the Légion forbidding him to speak, on the grounds that his demoralizing influence was responsible for the defeat. If he persisted they threatened to create a disturbance in the hall. Then at the last moment they funkcd and sent word they would let him speak after all. Gide did not call off the lecture, but when he appeared before a large and enthusiastic audience he declared that not wishing to sow dissension in the country or speak by favour of the Légion, he preferred, although the lecture had been passed by the military and civil authorities, and was on a purely literary subject, not to give it. 'Taisons-nous!' The public gave him a great ovation, forced the organizers of the lecture to read aloud the threatening letter and demonstrated loudly against the Légion. This affair created a certain sensation in Nice, especially among students, and it is said that there were 180 resignations from the Légion as a result. Although this affair was censored in the local press at the time, substantially true accounts were subsequently allowed to appear in the Paris papers, now published in the unoccupied zone, so you may have heard of it.

Besides the Légion there is also the P.P.F. (Doriot's men). These are professional thugs working for the Nazis and protected by the police, though not sponsored by the Government. Some people consider them terrifying, but I think there is even less basis for this than for the Légion though, they may murder a certain

number of us in our beds. But that won't matter much except to the murderers. So far they have not done much except write 'Vive Doriot!' on the walls and deface the statue of Queen Victoria at Cimiez. So much for Fascists and supporters of Vichy. What, you may ask, are their opponents doing?

As I have already said, there is, of course, a certain amount of passivity, especially in this zone, and I think probably a more active policy is impossible for the moment. People coming from the occupied zone seem to think that since the attack on the U.S.S.R. there are very few troops left in France, some say only 30,000. Wilder spirits are shocked that the opportunity is not taken to rise. But I think probably an insurrection now would be a mistake. All the same, there are indications that things are beginning to be organized. A very serious and intelligent man of no definite political opinions, but a violent Gaulliste, who travels a good deal in the South on business and talks to everybody, assures me that in many villages there are good shadow organizations ready for action when the moment comes. They have arms. Not, of course, arms suitable for fighting the German Army, but the sort of thing that would come in very handy in a civil war. An enormous quantity of small arms must have been retained by the soldiers after the defeat. There is, of course, a steady trickle of volunteers for de Gaulle, and there would be many more were it not so difficult, hazardous and expensive. There are many strange complicities in this traffic though. The P.S.F. (La Rocque's party) is said to contain many Gaullistes, and some say that there are members of the Action Française who spend their mornings writing anti-British articles and their afternoons helping volunteers to get away. There is no doubt the success of the de Gaulle radio propaganda has been very great. Everybody listens to it, though public listening has long been forbidden, and in some districts it is now advisable to shut one's windows before listening in private. Many people—chiefly highbrows—dislike its tone and think its style of propaganda unfortunate. I am not sure I agree with them. I do not care for it either, as you may well imagine, but I think that in the Goebbels style it could hardly be improved upon, and it has an ever-increasing effect on the masses. That is why I address this letter to you instead of to them. My conceptions are too far removed from theirs. Nevertheless, if they are to use anything in this letter they are welcome to it. But if of

any use please use it as *you* think fit. It must be said that even among intellectuals the B.B.C. broadcasts in French have their fans. But as a rule bourgeoisie and intellectuals prefer to listen to the B.B.C. in English. It should be noted that many people who are *not* Gaullistes, and who dislike 'les français de Londres', are passionately pro-British. This is especially true of ultra-reactionary *milieux* who dimly associate the Gaullistes with Jews, freemasons and the Front Populaire (!) In these *milieux* the older generation is often pro-Vichy and the younger pro-English. But in general there is more enthusiasm for the English than for de Gaulle. However, most people say he is a very good general, though they have heard it said he does not pay enough attention to detail, and is more than usually egocentric.

One sees an enormous quantity of V's everywhere, especially in Nice itself, where I think there is not a single house without five or six V's on its walls. Their numbers have completely eclipsed the 'P.P.F.'s and 'Vive Doriot's!', of which there are a certain number, frequently followed by the remark in another writing 'Affichage Gestapo'. A certain number of 'Vive Pétain's' are to be seen. Never 'Vive Darlan!', though 'Darlan au Potem' is occasionally to be met with. Sometimes one meets with 'Vive de Gaulle!', or 'Vive les Anglais!', and occasionally with 'A mort de Gaulle!', or 'les Anglais', 'R.A.F.' is fairly common. But since the V's began they have swamped almost everything. There are also a great quantity of croix de Lorraine.

A good many typewritten tracts circulate—most of them just dimly patriotic and anti-Vichy, very vague politically and rather stupid. There is an amusing poem circulating which may reach you. I have little information about the Stalinists and have seen none of their tracts. A good many of them have been sent to concentration camps and I suppose more will be sent now. But I have been somewhat out of touch with the great world for the last month, so have so far no echoes of the repercussions here of the tremendous event of June 22.

I heard a good deal of gossip during the winter about the party at Pellevoisin. Apparently all these gentlemen are extremely cheerful and daily awaiting their return to power(?) Their wives and mistresses live in extreme discomfort in the village inn, but are able to visit them every day because the prisoners are so popular and the jailers so unpopular with the local population.

that the only way the jailers can get eggs and butter is through 'ces dames'. So the prisoners hear all the news from the ladies, and during the British successes in the winter when spirits soared, they used to communicate with each other by singing the latest news through the windows to the tunes of the Marseillaise. 'I heard the latest English communiqué? . . . Glorious news, isn't it? Tra la la la . . .' Reynaud in particular, according to this account, which comes from a relative of one of the minor inhabitants of Pellevoisin, was described as being as merry as a grig.

Another account I heard agreed that Reynaud's morale was good as was Blum's, but said all the others were prostrated, especially Daladier and Gamelin. This, I must say, seems more likely. Blum apparently wrote his literary reminiscences in prison. All this information dates from the middle of the winter and since then, I am glad to say, Blum has been released (or would a martyr's end have been more desirable?) and is allowed to live quietly in a small village. I have actually seen a letter from him since his release, so it is certainly true. I have also heard (on very good authority) that the indictment against him contained four counts. These counts were *merely the three social laws of 1936* plus the creation of a 'ministère des loisirs'. There were no other charges at all. It is somewhat doubtful now that they will dare try anybody at Riom or elsewhere. Perhaps the most horrible thing Vichy has done so far is the partial putting into execution of the most dishonouring clause of the armistice—the famous clause 19 which stipulates the giving up of German political refugees.

It seems that for many months the Germans took no steps about having this clause carried out. They had, one supposes, other fish to fry and didn't bother about such hopelessly incompetent enemies. During this time the French police, being still full of anti-Fascists, connived the escape of a certain number of them to America, with, presumably, the tacit approval of the government. Meanwhile, the U.S.A. (who have behaved nobly if as usual rather slowly in this matter) issued a large number of so-called danger visas. The difficulty was to obtain the French 'visa de sortie', which allows you to leave the country. All these visas had to go to Wiesbaden and were systematically refused by the Germans who, though they were taking no refugees for the moment, didn't want them to get out of the rat-trap. Matters got

to such a pass that Admiral Leahy protested to Vichy against the refusal to allow non-French subjects to whom U.S. visas had been granted to leave the country. Upon which Vichy, after some demur, consented to issue a large number of visas. This was immediately discovered by the Germans, who, after making a certain amount of fuss, decided that the whole thing was rather boring and agreed to the issue of visas to all except a list of, it is said, 125 people which they insisted must be given up to them.

It seems that Vichy consented to this, and I know of three cases in which this shameful agreement was carried out. At one moment Spanish police were allowed to come in and arrest Caballero and Portela Valladares and some others in the unoccupied zone. But they were not permitted to remove them to Spain, and so far all Spanish demands for extradition have had to go before the regular courts and have failed. Thyssen, as is now known, was arrested in January in Cannes by French police and handed over to the Germans at the demarcation line. Hilferding and Breitscheid, who both had U.S.A. visas and were on the point of leaving, were both arrested at the beginning of February at Arles by French police. Hilferding, who actually possessed a 'visa de sortie', had been summoned shortly before to the Arles gendarmerie, where on the pretence of adding something to the visa the police had annulled it. A few days later a government car from Vichy with plain clothes state police in it arrived. They explained that the Gestapo were after H. and B. and could be expected to arrive at Arles in a few hours.

The French government, however, was determined to save them and had therefore sent one of their own cars to transport them to Vichy, where they would be safe for a few days and would afterwards be helped to escape to Spain. Hilferding and Breitscheid were fools enough to believe this (it must be remembered they are social-democrats). The plain clothes men actually asked them to hand over any poisons they might possess for safe keeping, and they did it! They then stepped into the car and were driven off to Vichy, where they were immediately taken to the local prison. They spent the night there and the next morning were put into another car and driven to the demarcation line where the Gestapo was waiting for them. In all probability they have been first tortured and then shot, according to the usual

procedure. Frau Breitscheid, who had accompanied her husband to Vichy, attempted to secure an interview with Peyrouten, then Minister of the Interior, who refused to see her. She then wrote an account of what had happened which I have seen and of which this is a résumé. I attempted to convey this information to you at the time, but it took three months, and only resulted in rather a comic misunderstanding.

At any rate, the facts seem to have become known in England in March. I don't know what details you may have heard, but I put them down here in case you have not heard them. A story is now being circulated in defence of Vichy's behaviour in the matter, according to which the police who took H. and B. were not French but Gestapo disguised as French. This, I confess, seems to be thin. Conditions for interned German refugees (and they seem to be interned or let out almost completely at haphazard) were terrible during the winter. Most of them were sent to the great concentration camp of Gurs in the Pyrenees, where the women were interned during the war. (Most women have been let out.) Here there is practically no water, hygienic conditions were appalling, and the ground so muddy that one woman who fell in the mud was unable to get up or attract attention and was drowned. In the middle of the winter the Germans suddenly rounded up about seven thousand Jews, men, women and children, in the district of Baden-Baden and sent them off to France in special trains.

The French authorities had the bright idea of sending them to join the party at Gurs, which was already overcrowded. The result was a terrible epidemic, with tens of people dying every day. Some of the rest petitioned the Gestapo to be sent to Dachau, which, by all accounts, is an ideal home from some compared with Gurs, or the even more dreaded Vernet, the reprisal camp. The disadvantage of Dachau, of course, is the possibility of being tortured by experts, but this only happens to certain selected people, and the rank and file live in tolerable conditions. There is no real torture in the French camps, but when there are *gardes-mobiles*, or Sénégalaise, instead of ordinary soldiers, who are almost always sympathetic and kind, there are often brutalities. Another camp, that of les Milles, near Aix, where people who have visas for the U.S.A. are sometimes sent pending their departure, is relatively decent. A terrible state of affairs is

reported from Marseilles, where the gangster police of that town now liberated from any sort of democratic control, simply seized quite arbitrarily and illegally, a certain number of German women whom they suspected of possessing a little money and locked them up in a louche hotel, run by one of their accomplices, where they held them to ransom for months in very bad conditions of forced labour. I don't know if this still goes on. The terror these gangsters inspire was so great that nobody dared do anything about it for fear of the same thing happening to them, though the facts were well known, especially among the honest members of the Marseilles police.

Another terrible scandal is the treatment of the Germans and Austrians who volunteered to serve in the Foreign Legion. Instead of being liberated at the end of the war (as they should have been according to the terms of the contract, many were kept on, formed into *bataillons de travailleurs* and sent to work in terrible conditions in the Sahara on the great trans-Saharan railway, or in iron mines. Although under the authority of officers and paid as though they were soldiers (fifty cents a day), they were in some cases simply hired to a private company, which thus obtained cheap slave labour from the government. This scandalous state of affairs seems to be passing away now. The men are being gradually set free or allowed to take up properly paid work (those of them who are capable of heavy manual work in Africa, but many are Jewish intellectuals who have never set eyes on a spade in their lives), but a certain number of them, for some obscure reasons, are still languishing in forced labour camps in the depths of the Sahara in summer.

However, in spite of all this a good many, though still a small minority, of political refugees have got away to America, including a good many of the small number who are really in danger.

I have heard a certain amount of information about French intellectuals and their attitude in the present circumstances. They are, of course, not so staunch as a body as the workers. Some of them have, through bribery or flattery or through weariness, discouragement or political cretinism, been induced to collaborate. Thus the best known French literary review, the *N.R.F.*, has reappeared in Paris (partly owing to pressure brought on the authors by the publisher, who is collaborating to a certain extent with the Germans). Of course, heavy doses of Nazi propaganda

is injected every month into the unreadable contents of this once respectable periodical. A few well-known journalists also write collaborationist articles in the unspeakable Paris Press or in the pro-Nazi Vichy papers, such as *Le Temps*, which seems to have transferred its allegiance from French to German heavy industry. But on the whole the Nazis have made very little progress on the literary, artistic, or, I believe, scientific fronts, and I know for a fact (it seems hardly worth while saying it) that almost all the great French writers and artists in both zones are anti-Nazi. Moreover, their attitude has recently decidedly stiffened and the *R.F.* which started with quite a cluster of stars (the names of some of whom had been used without their knowledge or permission) is now emptied of any really distinguished name. Among collaborationists the best known are Jacques Chardonne (who seems to have been sincerely converted to Fascism on meeting some nice German officers of great charm who flattered him), Abel Bonnard—now more commonly known as Abetz Bonnard, a degraded and corrupt academician who has for long been a public laughing stock; Drieu la Rochelle, a clever and talented Fascist; Ramon Fernandez, a professional Fascist and drunkard; Henry Bidou, an able journalist; and Bernard Fay, a professor who has just been made head of the Bibliothèque Nationale, in place of Cain, and whose first act was to 'lend' Marshal Goering that institution's great collection of hunting books. (It should be added that Hauteceur, director of the Beaux-Arts when Marshal Goering tried to get Gobelins tapestries out of him, would only give him copies, and insisted—successfully—on being paid in dollars, which shows what resistance can do.) Besides these, there are a certain number of obscure young men on the make whose names mean very little to me and would mean nothing at all to you.

Apart from this short list, the rest of French intellectuals can be taken as either war- and world-weary—a minority—or secretly but ardently pro-British and anti-Nazi without much else in their heads. They are rather more hysterical, of course, than the rest of the population, and alternate more frantically between hope and despair. Remain, of course, the Stalinists, who will probably heave a sigh of relief as the fatherland of the proletariat falls under the German heel, and return happily to the anti-Fascist patriotic front. The few remaining faithful had been out of things recently, not

knowing on which foot to stand, and had to take to writing low poems. I would like to tell you the names of the more ardent of the anti-collaborationist intellectuals—the list would include many famous names—but for obvious reasons I cannot do this. The following anecdote, however, being probably invented, cannot, I think, do much harm, though very likely you know it already. During the winter Herr Abetz paid a visit to Picasso in his studio in Paris. 'It's very cold here,' remarked Abetz (one of the ways of bribing people during the winter was to give them extra fuel). 'Oh, I don't mind,' replied Picasso. 'I have not been working for some time now and I can bear the cold.' 'Not working,' said Abetz. 'Have you given up work for long? What was your last picture?' 'I will show you a photograph of it,' said Picasso, and handed Abetz a photograph of Guernica. 'Oh,' said Abetz, 'did you do that?' 'No, *you* did that,' replied Picasso. Jacques Copeau who had been put at the head of the Comédie Française last autumn, was very quickly, and not without cause, relieved of his functions. Everywhere, of course, students and the higher forms in the lycées are in the vanguard of resistance to the Germans and opposition to Vichy, and this frequently when their parents are pro-Vichy.

A more *terre-à-terre* question is the food problem, which is really becoming tragic for the majority of the population. You probably know what our rations are, so I won't go into details, but they are certainly somewhat below the minimum of what is necessary, particularly for bread and other cereal foods. It is often impossible to obtain the full ration to which one is entitled, and such things as eggs, potatoes, fish and skim milk (full milk being reserved for children) are often unobtainable for months on end. This applied to meat, pork and, during the winter, fat. The smallest bread ration is always obtainable, and the bread is very good, though there is a lot of rye in it. The sugar ration, which is just sufficient, is also always obtainable. Rice seems to have vanished for good. Quite recently the last few drops of petrol have vanished, and even motor-cycles are shortly to disappear for lack of fuel. Conditions, however, seem to vary from one part of the country to another, and there are some places in the south-west where there is said to be as much to eat as ever. I can only speak for this region as it is relatively densely populated and produces comparatively little. The administration here could not be more

inefficient and manages to worsen considerably an already desperate situation.

The orders, counter orders, decrees, counter decrees, delays, ignorance, and probably corruption, of the imbecile bureaucracy, who make believe to deal with the tremendous problem of distributing the little there is to distribute, are enough to make even the worm turn, or at any rate wriggle about as though it was going to turn. Of course the primary cause of these near famine conditions is German and Italian pillage, which goes on steadily all the time. Huge percentages of all goods arriving at Marseilles, from eggs to bauxite, are sent off to the occupied zone, often by the military authorities, and there handed over. Besides this the Germans send their agents with lorries and plenty of petrol into the unoccupied zone, where they buy up quantities of food, pigs, etc., at prices well above those fixed by the Government. Italy gets her share of the plunder, especially, it is said, of oil (olive oil). Everybody understands this perfectly well; practically nobody believes in the blockade as the cause of all our misfortunes, for many have personal experience of this sort of pillage. Many people even complain that the blockade is not stringent enough. Nevertheless maladministration considerably aggravates things. There is a flourishing black market, where, for astronomical prices, everything can be had. And at whose head was, I need hardly say, M. Achard, 'Commissaire Général au Ravitaillement'. He seems to have run it with more efficiency than the rest of the Ravitaillement, but went a little too far, even for Vichy, and was obliged a few days ago to leave the Government. Besides which the smart hotels and restaurants (Nice has always been, and still is, a dictatorship of hotel-keepers) give their clients all they want, even butter, milk and chocolate, for breakfast. This may explain why old people cannot get the skim milk they are entitled to. The latest commodities to disappear are tobacco and wine. This is making a great impression on the population, and will be very hard for many who during last winter sustained themselves a good deal on wine (though they are sober enough here in the south). The tobacco problem is being solved by forbidding women to smoke! I can see the problem is a nasty one, for in practice only women of the bourgeoisie smoke, but it seems incredible that France should ever lack wine and tobacco, which she produces in such huge quantities. The authorities have recently made desperate and quite

futile attempts to stem the rising prices by fixing maximum price for vegetables, which form most people's staple food. As they forgot to co-ordinate them with prices in neighbouring departments, all vegetables promptly vanished and there was nothing to eat for several days. And so on. There are hundreds of examples of this sort of thing. The Americans are doing a lot for the children especially in the way of milk and vitamins; the bread they have provided is only a drop in the ocean of need, though it was beautiful white stuff and added greatly to the popularity of the U.S.A. A very popular and widely-circulated story is that when the American food ships arrived at Marseilles there was a grant ceremony for handing over the cargo, with all the authorities and Admiral Leahy present. The Bishop of Marseilles and the head of the Protestant community were also very much to the fore. When they had been presented to Admiral Leahy he appeared very much surprised and said, 'I see no representatives of the Jewish community. I think there must be some mistake. I am afraid the ceremony cannot proceed without their presence.' General consternation. Emissaries were sent off, who shortly returned with two quaking Rabbis, whom the Admiral addressed as follows. 'A large proportion of the provisions I am pleased to hand over to-day have been bought with the subscriptions of American Jews. They are to be distributed without regard to race or creed and I particularly count on *you*, gentlemen, to report to me on how the distribution is carried out.' The expressions on the faces of the Vichy officials can be imagined. Rather to the general surprise, Vichy's anti-semitic policy is decidedly unpopular even among the bourgeoisie. In the occupied zone Jews are said to be popular simply because the Germans persecute them, and they get work more easily than Aryans. In 'aryanized' firms Jewish partners, though formally eliminated, often continue to direct the business in the background.

So far I have only dealt with the unoccupied zone, but of course the interest of the country is chiefly centred in the occupied zone. It is there that resistance is centred; there that illegal literature chiefly circulates (one newspaper is said to have a circulation of 40,000); there that the German army can be observed and the stories from Germany itself leak out. I hear a good deal of gossip from the occupied zone, for people are continually crossing the demarcation line, legally or otherwise. Everybody one sees will

comes from that zone emphasizes the immense difference between the active resistance of the occupied zone, which in some parts (Normandy and Brittany and Alsace-Lorraine) amounts almost to guerrilla warfare, and the passive hopes that everything will come all right, thanks to England and America, which exist in this zone. Of course I cannot guarantee the truth of any of these stories about the occupied zone. I heard several accounts of the riots of November 11th. One account comes at several removes from a lady who was called upon to identify the body of her fourteen-year-old son, on November 29th, among about twenty others of the same age.

On the other hand, another account from a reliable source says the Germans only charged the young men with armoured cars without firing. This was in the Champs Élysées. I believe it was more serious in the Quartier Latin. The following story is well authenticated. Fifty young unemployed metallos of St. Denis were summoned to the Mairie, where they found one of the adjoints and a German officer who made them a fatherly little speech about the charms of life in German factories, and ended by asking all those willing to go to Germany to raise their hands. Only one hand was raised and the officer very politely asked them to think the matter over and come back next day. The next day they were told that if they refused work on such good conditions they would lose their *carte de chômage*. At this ten more accepted. The thirty-nine others were again asked to think it over and come back to-morrow. The next day they were told that if they still refused they also would lose their ration card. This is practically equivalent to sentence of death by starvation. It is not known how the story ended, as my informant, who is the uncle of one of the young men, had left for the unoccupied zone immediately afterwards.

I have heard (but at several removes) of a French prisoner of war who worked in a German factory and was helped to escape by his German comrades who lacked enthusiasm for Hitler. He crossed Germany posing as an Italian worker and finally reached Vichy safely, but having important information to communicate he rashly went to the 2^{ème} Bureau, where he instantly disappeared and is said to have been handed back to the Germans. The Germans are also said to seize skilled workers as they come out of factories and send them straight off to Germany. No, I don't

think with these methods the army of occupation is going to win over the French working-class to fascism. A more interesting question is will the French working-class be able to help the German soldiers deal with their Nazi officers when the moment comes, as I believe it will? It really does seem that the morale of the army of occupation is not of the best. The soldiers are frequently bored, depressed and cynical in spite of their vast pay and the officers are apt, especially when in their cups—and they are not infrequently in them—to confide their misgivings to French people with whom they have dealings. I know, too, that contacts have been made with anti-Nazis in the army of occupation. This most useful and excellent form of collaboration might obviously yield important results.

Unfortunately there were a lot of arrests some time ago, but obviously it will begin again. My chief fear is that the German army will make itself so unpopular that when the great day comes France might play the role of Poland in the Russian revolution. There is a certain 'Polish' spirit already present. However, if Hitler were to show signs of collapsing I do not doubt a revolutionary situation would be created in France. But should we know how to profit by it? But all this is distant speculation. A man I met recently had just made an extensive tour of the occupied zone and *zone interdite*, and had even managed to get as far as Metz which of course is now annexed. He reported the spirit of resistance to be as high as ever and Vichy universally execrated though Pétain himself was popular. Several rich bourgeois he had met who had been collaborationist, had recently changed their views finding conditions intolerable.

The violence of feeling in the *zone interdite* could not be said to be exaggerated, and at Metz German officers disappear every day. Asked what happens to them, he replied with a grin, 'They say at Metz that they reappear a day or two later in exchange for meat tickets, but in reality I think they just go into the Moselle.' This man, who had left just after the attack on Russia, did not seem to think the anti-bolshevik stunt was making much impression on the French bourgeoisie. All testimonies agree as to the violently francophile feeling in Alsace-Lorraine. As usual the Germans there have done more for France in six months than the French in twenty years.

A good deal of gossip about the industrial condition of

Germany has come my way recently from apparently reliable sources, i.e. French 'collaborationist' industrialists. This information is curiously concordant and seems to indicate a major crisis is developing in Germany. A serious informant has just come from the occupied zone, where he had met seven (unconnected) French industrialists, collaborators who in that capacity had just been visiting Germany. Some had been to Krupps, some to Leipzig, some to the Ruhr, etc. They all returned firmly convinced of British victory, their conviction being based on observation of the industrial and economic state of Germany, which according to them is extremely serious, in fact rapidly approaching 1918 conditions.

In particular the question of the replacement of machine-tools is acute. These should have been replaced in 1940, but the lack of certain metals which are only to be found in America, and which are necessary for alloys, made this impossible. Instead, French iron has been used, but this unalloyed is of inferior quality and the machine tools made out of it only last months. Germany, according to these people, has reached her peak of production and cannot raise it further. The only possible chance of victory lay in the invasion of Great Britain this summer, which they believed could be attempted. (This of course was before, though not long before, the invasion of the U.S.S.R.), but they thought that if England could hold out till October, America would then win the war. According to these business men the German ingenuity in the use of ersatz was not altogether an advantage, for it consists simply in transferring the necessary raw material from one branch of production to another. As a result several branches of industry are beginning to suffer acutely. Further information emanating from people in touch with the French general staff confirms this. In particular, according to these circles, Germany has obtained relatively little from France as far as industry is concerned, apart from raw materials, chiefly iron. French industrial plant is no use to Germany as it is organized to produce French types and would take a long time to change over to German types. Of course the important French automobile industry is being transformed to make German tanks, but this again will take a long time.) These informants also believed that Germany had reached her peak of production and *must* attack the British isles this summer. It is to be noted that these army circles *believed in a*

German victory. A third informant who confirmed these stories was a French business man, who had been an aviator during the war and who was violently anti-German with fair hopes of their defeat, but with a healthy respect for the German war-machine. He had just come from a business tour of the occupied zone where he had talked to all sorts of people. He entirely agreed that Germany had reached the peak of production and that the machine tools problem was acute, and added that the lubricating oil problem was even more acute. This man did not believe that there was a petrol shortage in Germany, thanks to their synthetic production, but there is no making synthetic fats and there is a desperate shortage of lubricators. As an example he quoted the fact that at the armistice the Germans seized a number of French locomotives which were probably the best on the Continent and returned them four months later fit for the scrap heap. According to this man sabotage by French workers is impossible under the surveillance of the Gestapo, but there is a good deal of *grève perlée*.

Well, I must now conclude this somewhat bloated epistle. How I wish this correspondence did not have to be so one-sided. Though I suppose not without potentially great importance, our performances here at this moment hardly seem to me worth a louse on the sacred head of the dirtiest and most incompetent soldier in the Red Army. So far that soldier and his comrades seem to me to be doing about as well or a shade better than I dared hope. So I suppose I must end now with heil Djugashvili.

Your affectionate

SILAS P.

TANGYE LEAN

PRE-WAR CITIZEN

Citizen Kane tells a story, but it is impossible (I think) to notice all its implications and details at the first visit, and after another there is still information to be collected from other people. This fertility makes it a new kind of film, different, for instance, from the more obscure German films of the 'twenties, whose intricacy was just a question of plot. The details of *Citizen Kane* deepen and widen its revelation of character, and even when their logical point is overlooked, they still produce a certain effect, as lines of *Hamlet* which pass too quickly for the intelligence to recognize.

Technically it is perhaps a decade ahead of its contemporaries. For the first time, and with a touch of pride one can forgive, a film shows every room complete with its ceiling. Gone are the roofless 'thirties when the fantasy of Hollywood directors and the apartments they revealed had no limit but the sky. For the first time—and this is away from realism—'depth of focus' is so efficiently exploited that events in the background are as sharp as in medieval Flemish paintings. (The human eye cannot manage this completeness; in life we keep choosing between foreground, middle-distance and background.) The camera is used originally, minimising the number of cuts, while the microphone is allowed to pick up cross-currents of sound which predecessors have been at pains to smother. Realism is such that a cameraman—and I imagine almost no one else—notices the sun has shifted round two or three points on the face of a character while he relates a long section of the story. The technical strength of *Citizen Kane* is that it takes nothing for granted, no rule of thumb, no convention, least of all the convention that the 'nineties were glamorous, only one or two clichés.

The plot seems complicated because we insist on reconstructing it in the orthodox time-sequence which Proust began to defy. Its outline in these terms is fairly simple. Born about 1866, died about now, Charlie Kane became one of our great irresponsible newspaper magnates. As a child an accident made him rich, and

his mother insisted that he should be taken away from his games the snow outside their Colorado shack for an education appropriate to his fortune. He hated leaving his sledge; he distrusted his mother's 'You won't be lonely, Charles'; he raged, but was dragged away for good.

Twenty years later he entered journalism as a fighting Liberal: 'the friend of the working man', whose motto was 'all the news honestly', whether it was scandalous, profoundly shocking, or merely intimate. His circulations grew; his papers multiplied. He had a lust for controlling other people's opinions. He ran for Governor of New York City, but was defeated at the last moment by the exposure of his relations with a Miss Susan Alexander. That finished him politically. 'You're not going to like organized labour one little bit, when you find it means your working man expects something as his right, and not your gift,' his closest friend tells him. 'Oh, boy, that's going to add up to something bigger than your privilege, and then I know what you'll do. Sail away to a desert island, probably, and lord it over the monkeys.' (To which Kane, always smart, replies: 'There'll probably be a few of them there to tell me when I do something wrong'.)

Kane went to his desert island. But not yet, not till the sexual flop was as complete as the political flop. Because it wasn't yet certain that he had failed with women. There had been a loss and he had quarrelled disastrously with his first wife, but Susan seemed more promising. The day after they married, he described her as a cross-section of the American public: but that was in her favour. As he had once championed the working man, so now he would transform her quavering soprano into the voice of a prima donna. What surprised him was that despite the headlines of two dozen newspapers and the erection of a \$3,000,000 Opera House he failed. Still more surprising was her desire to stop making herself ridiculous.

Kane: You'll continue with your singing, Susan. I don't propose to have myself made ridiculous.

Susan: You don't propose to have yourself made ridiculous? What about me? I'm the one that has to do the singing. I'm the one that gets the razberries!

And Kane only desisted when she had all but successfully committed suicide. Then they went to Xanadu. He had built this castle with less taste than Kubla Khan but on an equally lavish



KANE: ' . . . the working man and the slum child know they can expect my best efforts in their interests. The decent, ordinary citizens know I'll do everything in my power to protect the underprivileged, the underpaid, and the underfed. . . I'd make my promises now if I weren't too busy arranging to keep them.'



te. Standing in 40,000 Florida acres, with sub-castles in Baroque, gothic and Greek, it was surrounded by monkeys, elephants and raffes in cages. His art purchases rivalled those Napoleon secreted in the Louvre.

Susan: 'A person could go crazy in this dump. Nobody to talk to, nobody to have any fun with. Charlie, I want to go to New York. I wanta have fun. Please, Charlie . . . Charles, *please*. . .'

Kane: 'Our home is here, Susan. I don't care to visit New York.' He gave her parties with hundreds of guests. Cars processed along their private seaside, negro bands played. She left him, and he died, muttering the odd word 'Rosebud. . .'

Simplified to this extent the story may seem like a suitable modern setting for George Arliss. On the screen it happens differently. It happens as a prodigious jumble of events torn out of their time sequence. First a three minute impression of Xanadu with thick lips muttering 'Rosebud . . .' and a hand relaxing on a glass ball which rolls down some steps and smashes. Then the life of Kane told as *March of Time* would tell it. Then the newsreel editors set out to discover the meaning of this word 'Rosebud', and a long investigation goes on as if this was a puzzle for detectives. Five people who knew Kane well are interviewed, and in the course of these interviews, while time switches to and fro and the reels of the film are spent, we gradually get to know him. But no one knows anything about Rosebud; no one except at the end, Kane's butler, and he can only say that Kane muttered the word when his second wife deserted.

So the investigators, standing in the assembled bric-à-brac of Xanadu, give up the search. 'If you put all this stuff together,' says one of them, who has been toying with a jig-saw puzzle of Susan Kane's, 'what would it spell?' 'Rosebud?' suggests another. 'I don't think so,' the first replies. 'I don't think any word can explain a man's life. No. I guess Rosebud is just a piece in a jig-saw puzzle, a missing piece.'

But the camera sweeps up and back, revealing the full extent of the *objets d'art* which look from the distance exactly like a jig-saw puzzle, and then it dives purposefully down; over the Donatello Nativity and the fourth-century Venus, past the crates containing a Scottish castle, the urns, trays, gongs, screens, until it selects a single object which is being thrown into a furnace by workmen. It is the sledge called Rosebud from which Charlie

Kane was forcibly separated in his childhood. And that, except for a little smoke, is the end.

Now I think this is a great film because you can leave it, as the investigators do, a minute before the end, and it remains an extraordinary comment on our old civilization and its values. For the first time someone in Hollywood is being serious, for instance, about journalism. 'If the headline is big enough, it makes the news big enough,' is one of Kane's principles, and this determination to adjust the facts to his desires extends to everything he touches, and applies particularly to his employees, who in return for high pay must be efficient writing-machines stripped of principles of their own. It is true that the world does not wholly accept Kane—he is too much of a parody of its defects for that—but it marvels. 'The greatest tycoon of this or any other century is the view of the newsreel commentator, who places one of America's major financial scoundrels as the Grand Old Man of Wall Street. Kane is of course on speaking terms with the dictators and Prime Ministers of Europe, and false values are firmly founded in him that rather than admit, even to himself, the true nature of these men and their world, he replies to a reporter, 'I talked with the responsible leaders of the Great Powers—England, France, Germany and Italy. They are too intelligent to embark upon a project which would mean the end of civilization as we know it. You can take my word for it, there will be no war.'

False, false, false. . . . The criticism is hammered into us so effectively that *Citizen Kane* seems to have come from the study of a post-war world rebuilding itself on a basis of new values. Hollywood has always accepted, if it did not go far to make, the early twentieth century; Orson Welles holds it up and says: 'Look there, and there, and at that.'

He is greatly helped by a cast devoid of 'stars'; because of this and his one-man control as director and producer we get, instead of the familiar competition for a place in the arc-lights, an organic and unified picture.

If you leave a minute before the end, you see all this and more. But if you don't leave, and if you accept the discovery of 'Rosebud' as something more significant than an O. Henry ending, a vast pattern of inter-related human themes becomes clear—as a different one does in the last volume of *A la Recherche*

Temps Perdu. We realize that when the child Charlie Kane was snatched away from his mother at her own instructions, a wound was inflicted on him that he didn't forget, that he spent his adult life trying to heal. He tried politically, fighting with crude and diluted egotism for the rights of other people; he tried with women, and they resented his egotism even more bitterly than the workers did. He developed a megalomania whose roots lay in the situation he had been unable to control. 'This Rosebud you're trying to find out about. . . .' says Kane's former manager. 'Maybe that was something he lost. Mr. Kane was a man who had almost everything he had.' To which his closest friend adds 'Love. . . . That's why he did everything. That's why he went into politics. It seems we weren't enough. He wanted all the women to love him, too. All he wanted out of life was love. That's Charlie's story. How he lost it. You see he just didn't have any to give. Oh, he loved Charlie Kane, of course. Yeh. Very dearly. And his mother, I guess he always loved her.'

His mother, but no one else. Is this what the 'twenties and thirties would have called Freud?

Technically, I have insisted, there are two very striking things about this film, the precise focus over the whole area of the screen and the overlapping of sounds so that two different sentences are often reaching our ears at the same time. We are forced by these devices to lay our own emphasis on the data, to make our own selection. Orson Welles even takes a perverse, sometimes slightly cheap, delight in heightening our difficulty. As an instance I would say that it is of the greatest possible relevance that Kane fell in love with Susan immediately after he had seen on her dressing table a crystal ball containing a snow-covered shack and a sledge. It is this crystal which reminds him of 'Rosebud' when his wife leaves him, and which he holds when he dies. But the crystal has the same lack of prominence on the screen as Susan's hairbrushes, and most of the audience, if they noticed it, would probably not agree with me in thinking it of greater interest.

Orson Welles likes this confusion. He extends it beyond the technical management of light and sound. He will give us, partly because he is a first-class showman, five or ten superb minutes of chorus girls dancing as a background to a serious conversation, five minutes of a political speech by Kane, but only thirty seconds of the vital scene in which his mother sends him

into exile. But Welles would certainly answer that life itself treats the important things in this arbitrary fashion. 'A fellow would remember a lot of things you wouldn't think he'd remember,' says Kane's manager when asked about Rosebud. 'You take me, for example. One day back in 1896 I was crossing over to Jersey on the ferry, and as we pulled out there was another ferry pulling in, and on it there was a girl waiting to get off. A white dress she had on. She was carrying a white parasol. I only saw her for one second. She didn't see me at all, but I'll bet a month hasn't gone by since then I haven't thought of that girl.'

Equally, Orson Welles believes that the significant things that happen to us are the ones that get condensed, overlooked, forgotten. He does something to point the significance of the muddled more than is done for us by life itself, but less than by a medical case history or a political novel. There is room, as in all good art, for you to take your choice. Freud would have been at liberty to pin Rosebud down as a symbol with the precise significance his experience had taught him to diagnose. Marx could have pointed to the necessary spiritual corruption involved in the possession of capital—'You know Mr. Bernstein, if I hadn't been very rich, I might have been a really great man'. The perceptive agnostic can make what choice he likes within the limits of the material, but he feels an obligation to account for it more or less completely; the film has so obviously a meaning that he feels irritated if he cannot, or will not, see one that convinces him. It is worth noticing that some people are as outraged as their ancestors were by, say, *Hernani*; but this is not simply irritation at being confronted by a new art form, it is also a refusal to accept the implied criticisms of character and society.

Life is like this, and so is Proust's novel, but not up to now in Hollywood. Orson Welles is twenty-six, with say forty years of work ahead of him.

'Citizen Kane,' an RKO Radio Picture, directed and produced by Orson Welles, will be generally released early in the New Year. Meanwhile, it can be seen in the West End of London and at certain provincial towns unspecified at the time of going to press.

SELECTED NOTICES

wake, and other Poems. By W. R. Rodgers. Secker & Warburg. 5s.

W. R. Rodgers, some of whose poems were first published in *Horizon*, is undoubtedly a writer of real distinction.

A poet who has a command of words, an individual technique, and a capacity to say what he means, as distinct from the many writers who have some good taste, happy moments, and who are intoxicated with uncontrolled words and ideas, is a literary event. The critics should therefore salute Mr. Rodgers, and those who enjoy poetry should read him.

W. R. Rodgers has the intellectual power to organize a strong imagination. That is saying a great deal, and beyond it, there is little that it can be useful to say at present. I think it is misleading to say, as one critic has done: 'I back him to go as far, or further than, Auden.' Critics are not tipsters, and there is nothing whatever in Rodgers's poetry to invite comparison with Auden, unless one regards all contemporary literature as a great race in which one poet wins, thus doing credit to the critic who has backed him. Rodgers lacks Auden's intellectual curiosity, lightness of touch, mastery of varied patterns, everything that is Auden's; just as Auden lacks Rodgers's vivid kinetic imagery and attractive clumsiness which makes reading some of his poems resemble walking across a ploughed field on a windy day, with occasional glimpses of a bright transparent sky through the clouds.

The poet whom it may be helpful to compare Rodgers with is Frederic Prokosch. Prokosch is musical and smooth, whereas Rodgers is harsh, violent and unmusical, but nevertheless their talents are similar in being immediately attractive as poetic types, with an almost physical attraction. Neither goes very far beyond the attractiveness of his poetic appearance, as yet. Prokosch is hyacinthine, Narcissus-like, Grecian; Rodgers is husky and hairy, a man from the Irish bogs (I speak of their poetic, not their physical, exteriors). The reader is fascinated by both of these appearances; but when it comes to asking the poet what he thinks, they are both curiously monosyllabic. If they do express anything resembling an idea, its conventionality contrasts rather strangely with their lush style.

Thus Mr. Rodgers is most successful in taking ordinary attitudes to life and projecting them in brilliant pictures. The most brilliantly successful of these attempts is *Summer Holidays*, an account of the clerk's excursion on holiday into natural scenery. The view of the clerk, that his life consists of Rut and Rout, is one that has been insisted on by many poets, since about the year 1900. Within the limits of this modern poetic convention, *Summer Holidays* is a striking word-picture sustained for several pages, and only collapsing in the commonplaces about History at the end.

The imagery of Rodgers's poetry often strikes one with a shock of surprise and delight, like some French impressionist paintings.

'Suddenly all the fountains in the park

Opened smoothly their umbrellas of water.'

This is lovely, surely, and there are many moments as lovely in this short book.

Rodgers's faults are an unrestrained verbosity and a sometimes tiresome over-use of alliteration. With more economy he would be a wholly delightful, if somewhat spasmodic, poet. With more thought the development of his poems would be strong and sweeping. As it is his lines tend to arrest the attention, and then fail to develop beyond what is vivid and striking. Sometimes the ends of poems seem arbitrary and prosaic.

This volume contains all that Mr. Rodgers has as yet written, so naturally there are occasional failures. But the general impression it leaves is that he is already a poet with a brilliant power of observation and an ability to organize, in *Summer Holidays*, many images and pictures into a coherent whole. There are genuine and memorable experiences in this book.

STEPHEN SPENDER

ABOUT LAST NUMBER

The editors wish to apologize for the faulty reproduction of Ben Nicholson's painting 'Au Chat Botte Dieppe' in the October number. The lines on the woman's face and on the guitar were redrawn on the block by the block-maker instead of by the artist, and a large amount of the left-hand side of the painting has been omitted, thus giving a false impression of the drawing and construction.

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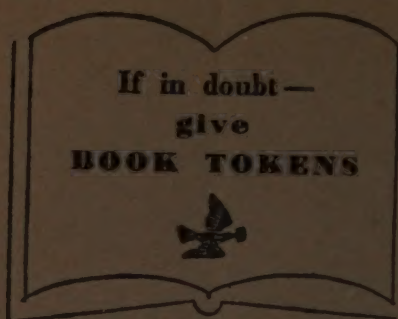
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